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IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A CUSTOMER
JOURNEY MAPPING APPROACH

Master's Thesis by the 2nd year student Elizaveta Kaledina
Concentration — Marketing

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АННОТАЦИЯ

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Описание цели, задач и основных результатов	<p>Ответственное потребление приобретает все большую заинтересованность со стороны общества. Однако, несмотря на то что потребители позитивно относятся к покупке устойчивых продуктов, они редко их приобретают. Существует несоответствие между мышлением потребителей и их фактическими действиями, известное как разрыв в отношении и поведении. Целью данной работы является определение барьеров, препятствующих устойчивому поведению потребителей, путем достижения 3 целей: (1) создать прототипы личности покупателя, (2) разработать карту путешествия покупателя для каждого из прототипов, (3) проанализировать барьеры, препятствующие устойчивому поведению потребителя и представить выводы. Данное исследование выявило 13 барьеров, которые блокируют процесс приобретения устойчивых продуктов. Понимание данных барьеров подразумевает как стратегические, так и оперативные преимущества для специалистов по маркетингу и стратегии в розничном бизнесе, цель которых - охватить как можно большее количество потенциальных покупателей и положительно повлиять на их решение о приобретении устойчивого продукта.</p>
Ключевые слова	Устойчивое поведение потребителя, Ответственное потребление, Устойчивое развитие, Разрыв в отношении и поведении, Прототип личности покупателя, Карта путешествия покупателя

ABSTRACT

Master Student's Name	Elizaveta Kaledina
Master Thesis Title	Identifying Barriers to Sustainable Consumer Behavior: a Customer Journey Mapping Approach
Main field of study	38.04.02 "Management" (Specialization: Marketing)
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Description of the goal, tasks and main results	Responsible consumption is a burgeoning movement, yet even with consumers showing positive concerns regarding sustainable purchasing, they rarely purchase ethically. There is a discrepancy between consumers' thinking and actual actions known as attitude-behavior gap. This study aims to identify barriers that inhibit sustainable consumer behavior by attaining 3 objectives: (1) create buyer personas, (2) design a customer journey map for each of the personas, (3) analyze barriers to sustainable consumer behavior and provide implications. The research revealed 13 barriers that inhibit sustainable purchase. Awareness of these barriers provides both strategic and tactical implications for marketers and retail business strategists who aim to reach larger number of customers and affect their decision to purchase sustainable product.
Keywords	Sustainable consumer behavior, responsible consumption, sustainable development, attitude-behavior gap, buyer persona, customer journey map.

Table of contents

Table of contents	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Literature review.....	7
2.1 Transformation of the problematics of sustainable development.....	7
2.2 Sustainable development and corporate sustainability	9
2.3 Sustainable business and customers: reaching the win-win.	14
2.4 Sustainable consumption: definition, frameworks and models	15
2.5 The attitude-behavior gap and barriers to sustainable consumer behavior.	20
3. Methodology.....	26
3.1 Research method.....	27
3.2 Selected product category.....	27
3.3 Target.....	28
3.4 Data collection.....	29
4. Data analysis. Customer journey map	31
5. Findings	38
6. Discussion.....	43
Conclusion	46
Sources.....	50
Appendices	58

1. Introduction

Escalating attention to growing global environmental changes caused by humanity brings us to Anthropocene, a new geological epoch, where human actions are the main driver for the global environmental change (Rockström et al., 2009). Human pressure risks lead basic Earth-system processes to highly pervasive, widespread and irrevocable consequences. With constant weather extremes, shortage of water, worsening poor production, and losses of ecosystem, the importance of reducing the negative impact and contributing to a better future has become a crucial topic for numerous players on global arena (Griggs et al., 2013). Market pressures bring sustainability to business attention through core management channels and functions. This realization and concern towards the environment and society has led to the emergence of “sustainable development” which distinguishes the need to promote sustainability and advocates a form of development which minimizes negative impact on the environment and society (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). The time we are living it is the most important historical point for sustainable development, because business is going through massive change of the system. Hence the meaning of sustainable development must also be re-evaluated (Bansal, 2019) with a view on corporate sustainable development being a in the very center of stage and serving as an example on a private case of sharp escalation of a global problem.

Businesses have taken numerous attempts to improve their competitive positioning by linking their corporate strategy and sustainability, translating the issue into the core functions of management, such as operational efficiency, capital acquisition, strategic direction, and market growth. Each case had led to establishing a transformed business model in order to cover for costs triggered by the changes. By using new model, the response to a global problem can be given (Hoffman, 2018). By changing business model, company treats sustainability as any other business threat and addresses changing marketing expectations.

However, it appears that today business model transformation is not enough to cover for all the costs caused by investments to corporate sustainability, complying with stakeholders' expectations, including those of the customers (Hoffman, 2018). Instead of waiting for a market to create an incentive for sustainable practices, companies create it themselves and thus encourage their customers in being responsible consumers. Sustainable consumption relates to environmentally responsible consumers who consider the environmental impact on all stages of their consumption journey (Moisander, 2007).

Consumers do, in fact, express their demand for green products to companies (Bockman et al., 2009; Schmeltz, 2012). The number of customers stating their intention to buy sustainable products has increased in last few years, however, little evidence can be found towards suggesting

the actual purchase of these hoods has increased, with the share of 1-3% of the global market (Bray, Johns & Killburn, 2011). According to Hughner et al. (2007), many consumers showed positive concerns regarding sustainable purchasing, only a small number of those (around 4%) did purchase such products. It thus becomes clear that there is a gap between consumers' thinking and actual actions (Chen and Chai, 2010, Wheale and Hinton, 2007), which indicates that consumer positive attitude towards green products is not always taken into action. This discrepancy is known as an attitude-behavior gap and appears as a main **problem** in this research.

Pursuing the goal to narrow this gap and incentivize consumers to act more responsibly in terms of their purchasing, scholars called for research into why positively concerned consumers rarely translate their attitudes into actual purchase behavior (Gupta and Ogden, 2009; Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Bunga Bangsa & Schlegelmilch, 2020). A number of recent studies, that examined cognitive and rational aspects of attitude-behavior gap have discovered the presence of certain barriers that inhibit purchase of sustainable product.

Thus, the **research question** of this work is the following:

What are the barriers that impede sustainable consumer behavior?

However, most of the studies, despite different conceptualization techniques of the sustainable consumer behavior, basically revolve around two areas: identifying factors affecting individuals' refusal to be sustainable consumers and the degree of their influence. None of the studies attempting to explain the causes of attitude-behavior gap provided a material representation of customers' decision-making process and conscious thinking. Peattie (1999) suggests that the clearest way to understand green consumerism is by examining one's consumption behavior as a series of purchase decisions and actions, thus insights of consumers' purchasing procedure are significantly needed.

This study adopts customer journey mapping approach. Aligning customers' purchasing stages and their mental representation of physical and decision-making process while shopping allows to identify barriers that appear at a certain stage of customer journey, their perception of situation, reaction and emotional response.

The **goal** of this work is the following: identify barriers that inhibit sustainable consumer behavior through material representation of individuals' conscious thinking and reconstruction of their decisional premises and actions.

This research has 3 main **objectives**:

1. Create buyer Personas.
2. Design a customer journey map for each of the Personas.
3. Analyze barriers to sustainable consumer behavior and provide implications.

The research brings the following academic relevance: obtaining new knowledge derived from this study expands the current body of research and allows scholars explore sustainable consumer behavior with a customer-centric approach, gaining new insights and broadening out the understanding the nature of barriers, contributing to the attitude-behavior gap. The results of this study are also relevant and can be integrated into the work of retailers and marketing strategists, who can use customer journey map as an artefact to understand, at what stages barriers are located, convey information on customer experience in concise and memorable way, share a vision on tackling the problem and encourage customers in giving their preference to sustainable products.

2. Literature review

2.1 Transformation of the problematics of sustainable development

Going back in time, sustainability was approached by the companies as nothing more than a “green” issue that was being addressed on the periphery, rarely seen as a strategy, integrated into companies’ business core. Today, this approach is changing on the fast pace. Companies of all sizes and sectors now have to adapt their business to a variety of such disruptive forces as globalization, severe competition for natural resources and raw materials, technological advancements, which is changing their business models by forcing companies to integrate sustainable development into their core as well as to be more transparent with all of their stakeholders. As a result, sustainability is moving from the corporate side-lines into the core functions (PwC, 2020). The awareness of sustainable development becomes a much-discussed topic within recent years, involving numerous concerned individuals and organizations into discussion (Abdulrazak & Quoquab, 2018).

The key challenge of sustainable development is how to satisfy human and organizational needs under the real resource constraints over time (Kim et al., 2019). In the past decade, sustainable development has been shifted from just a concept to a central paradigm on global arena in discussions on economic development. As an extremely high-paced loss of biodiversity, increasing resource scarcity and intensifying climate change are threatening the life-support systems of the planet, the discussions of ways to prevent the growing threat started. (IPBES, 2019).

In 2015, United Nations Member States committed to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, creating a new path of for the social, ecological and economic problems to be addressed. Notably, the committee proposed the efforts to achieve these goals to be taken in an “integrated and indivisible” manner, by “balancing” the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.” (United Nations, 2015). It is of primary importance that businesses were heavily involved in the development of these sustainable

development goals and are seen as critical partners in enabling their achievements (Howard-Grenville et al., 2019).

Numerous countries have taken action to integrate the Goals and targets into their national development plans and to align policies and institutions behind them (United Nations, 2019). Among its main goals, the Agenda is aimed to find solutions to poverty, inequality, climate change and other global challenges. The main policy priority of this global environmental movement has been an education campaign aimed at shifting consumer preference towards more sustainable resource use pattern as the main solution to tackle the climate change (The UN Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2019).

Griggs and colleagues (2013) imply that by international coordination of actions, the environmental risks may be reduced. However, the targets for these Sustainable Development Goals must be based on latest research and hence why measurable and by applied to both developed and developing countries. The authors also propose the necessary transformation of the paradigm of sustainable development defined by UN (3 pillars – economic, social and environmental), reconstructing it into the “nested” concept, in which global economy services society, which lies within Earth’s life-support system. Thus, the definition of term “sustainable development” should be transformed to “development that meets the needs of the present while safeguarding Earth’s life-support system, on which the welfare of current and future generations depends”. Authors especially emphasize, that reducing poverty and hunger, improving people’s life-being are especially connected with creating sustainable production and consumption incentive. However, none of that would be possible without the changes on the “economic playing field” (Griggs et al., 2013).

Over the past year, with extreme social media power leverage bringing massive public attention, the problem of sustainable development has become sharper than ever. In January 2020, Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, age 17, for the second time participated in Davos World Economic Forum, where she addressed the negotiation on over-consumption and carbon dioxide emissions, claiming that “we do not have the time to wait for new technological solutions to become available to start drastically reducing our emissions”. With sustainability problems already being a significant area of concern of younger generations, this serves, besides activists, as a direct call to action to companies (The NY Times, 2020). The role of business contribution to sustainable development was among top issues discussed at the World Economic Forum where it was specifically highlighted that something that was once considered a company mission to do social good is now a business imperative (World Economic Forum, 2020).

2.2 Sustainable development and corporate sustainability

Going back in time, sustainability was approached by the companies as nothing more than “green” issue that was being addressed on the periphery, rarely seen as a strategy, integrated into companies’ business core. Today, this approach is changing on the fast pace. Companies of all sizes and sectors now have to adapt their business to a variety of such disruptive forces as globalization, severe competition for natural resources and raw materials, technological advancements, which is changing their business models by forcing companies to integrate sustainable development into their core as well as to be more transparent with all of their stakeholders. As a result, sustainability is moving from the corporate side-lines into the mainstream (PwC, 2020).

Diving deeper into the concept of corporate sustainability, a question arises: how can companies contribute to sustainable development if they basically are the creators of a problem? The report on the economics of climate change estimated that world’s 3000 biggest companies would lose a one-third of their profit if they were to pay for use, loss and damage of environment (Stern, 2007). Nearly two thirds of all historic carbon dioxide and methane emissions were caused by no more than 90 corporations (Heede, 2014). World Commission on Environment and Development report’s authors claim, that while corporations have always been the main drivers of the economic development, they are the primary responsible party for balancing development with social equity and protection of the environment, because partially they stimulated the cause to unsustainable conditions. However, authors consider organizations as protagonists in pursuing problems of sustainable development due to the fact that they have an access to the resources necessary to address these problems (Oxford University Press, 1987). In 1992, in their publication *Changing Course*, Stephen Schmidheiny and the Business Council for Sustainable Development bring in focus the importance of corporations to be involved in sustainable development, asserting that supporting sustainable development has as much economic relevancy as environmental and social relevancy (MIT Press, 1992). The contribution of sustainable development is often recognized by scholars as two-fold: first, it sets the areas of corporate focus: its environmental, social, and economic performance. Second, it creates a common societal goal for corporations, governments, and other stakeholders to work towards ecological, social, and economic sustainability (Wilson, 2003; Ebner & Baumgartner, 2006; Ike et al., 2019).

Taking into the consideration the crucial role of companies for sustainable development, it is now common to see corporations engaging into it. For example, it is captured as a growing amount of companies who are engaged in corporate sustainability in the Fortune 500 index (Brown, Vetterlein, & Roemer-Mahler, 2010) and in the percentage of those companies who adopt a certified pro-environmental system of management in accordance with ISO 14001 (Federal

Environment Agency, 2018). Academic literature also suggests there was an increase in companies performing corporate sustainability procedures over two decades (Doluc, Holzner, & Wagner, 2018) as well as in adopting proactive business strategies that are being integrated in a strategic manner as core part to business (Bansal & Hoffman, 2011; Darnall et al., 2010).

However, research literature also highlights that the current level of corporate engagement for sustainability is insufficient for existing within the planetary boundaries (Whiteman, Walker, & Perego, 2013 and). Planetary boundaries is the framework presented by J. Rockström and colleagues in 2009, which defines preconditions for human development. In general, these are values for control variables that are either at a “safe” distance from thresholds or at dangerous level.

There are 9 processes for which planetary boundaries are necessary to be defined climate change; rate of biodiversity loss (terrestrial and marine); interference with the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles; stratospheric ozone depletion; ocean acidification; global fresh water use; change in land use; chemical pollution; and atmospheric aerosol loading. Notable, that 3 of 9 interlinked planetary boundaries have already been crossed: climate change, rate of biodiversity loss, and nitrogen cycle. Because many of the boundaries are linked, exceeding one will have implications for others. As long as none of the thresholds are not crossed, humanity has the freedom to pursue long-term social and economic development goals (Rockström et al., 2009).

On top of that, an increase in corporate sustainability action is happening over time not for all companies and not fast enough (Cramer, 2005; Doluca, Wagner, & Block, 2018). Thus, companies need to be engaged into sustainability on a higher corporate level. (Hörisch, Wulfsberg & Schaltegger, 2019).

To understand the way business can make an effective contribution in order to address the sustainability challenges and contribute to those effectively, it essential to review the theoretical framework proposed by academia on this topic.

Numerous scholars have presented the analysis of companies’ initiatives and their adoption on implementing key goals on sustainable development into the core strategy of their business. From one perspective, this process comprises multiple stages and can be visualized as a learning process organization has to go through, moving from the starting point of ignoring, or avoiding the responsibility (defensive stage) to the final stage, upon reaching which company is actively engaged in “focused, but extensively CSR programs” (civil stage) (Zadek, 2004).

Table 1. Stages of corporate sustainable development adoption. Adopted from Zadek (2004).

Stage	What Companies Do	Why They Do It	Example
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Defensive: “It’s not our job to fix that”	Deny existence of problematic practices, or responsibility for addressing them.	To defend against attacks that could affect short term sales, recruitment, productivity, and the brand.	Royal Dutch/Shell denied its responsibility for emissions created by the production and distribution of its energy products.
Compliant: “We’ll do just as much as we have to”	Adopt a policy-based compliance approach as a cost of doing business.	To mitigate the erosion of economic value in the medium term because of ongoing reputation and litigation risks.	Nestlé came under fire for the health dangers of its infant formula: activists claimed that mothers in developing countries would mix the powder with contaminated water. Nestlé communicated the hazard in its marketing messages to new mothers – rather than trying to educate them about how to ensure their babies’ overall nutrition.
Managerial: “It’s the business”	Give managers responsibility for the social issue and its solution, and integrate responsible business practices into daily operations.	To mitigate medium-term erosion of economic value and achieve longer-term gains.	Nike realized that complying with agreed-upon standards in its global supply chains would be impossible if it didn’t also change its daily operations. These changes included eliminating procurement incentives that encouraged buyers to circumvent code compliance to hit targets and secure bonuses.
Strategic: “It gives us a competitive edge”	Integrate the societal issue into their core business strategies.	To enhance economic value in the long run and gain first-mover advantage over rivals.	Automobile companies know that their future depends on their ability to develop environmentally safer forms of transportation.
Civil: “We need to make sure everybody does it”	Promote broad industry participation in corporate responsibility.	To enhance long-term economic value and realize gains through collective action.	Alcohol purveyor Diageo and other top alcohol companies know that restrictive legislation will come unless they involve the whole sector in promoting more responsible drinking practices.

Notably, in their works many authors trace the analogical evolution of the corporate sustainability practices (Porter & Kramer, 2002, 2006; Spitzack et al., 2013; Spitzack & Chapman, 2012). Porter and Kramer argue that companies lean towards proactive approaches aimed to add value and exploit the positive link between business and society (Porter & Kramer, 2002). In their more recent research, however, authors begin to emphasize the growing positive relationship between social and environmental issues and creation of economic value. They take up the position that companies’ philanthropic activities can create long term value only if initially being planned as “strategic social investments”, that are implemented with a purpose integrating companies’ practices and the social context in which they operate (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

With time, new frameworks that disclaim companies more deep and thorough commitment into the sustainable development were developed. In later researches, the focus was moved to investigating how companies should act in order to integrate social and environmental issues into their core business. Such a way is identified as strategic tool to create economic value and perceive sustainable development goals at the same time. There is a number of concepts that demonstrate how companies conduct implementing corporate sustainability into their strategy, such as Shared Value (Porter and Kramer, 2011), Creative Capitalism (Gates, 2008), or Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (Austin and Reficco, 2006).

However, with proven growing involvement of companies engaged into sustainable development and the variety of corporate sustainability frameworks being proposed, most firms yet still have not been able to implement the strategy for corporate sustainability into their core business processes, where it remains an activity on the periphery (Austin and Reficco, 2006). The challenge of integrating sustainability into a firm's activities requires an evolution of the original model to reflect new challenges and new ways of doing business. A newer, more advanced solution was proposed by T. Dyllick and K. Muff in 2015 in their work *Clarifying the Meaning of Sustainable Business: Introducing a Typology From Business-as-Usual to True Business Sustainability*.

Today, more corporations claim to manage their business sustainably, however, from that derives a need to distinguish between those companies that contribute effectively to sustainability and those who do not. Recent studies show, that despite companies asserting to make a strong impact by being engaged into sustainable development, the results of studies exploring the current state of the planet do not justify for this pledged contribution. In their work, T. Dyllick and K. Muff call this consequence a “big disconnect”, acknowledging ways in which companies can contribute effectively addressing sustainability challenges and investigating the attributes of “truly sustainable business”. In order to embed sustainability throughout the organization, businesses have to address all the important aspects by a sustainable management system. Every strategic unit of the organization must be affected: strategies and operation, governance and management, organizational behavior, corporate values, auditing and reporting systems. In order to indicate what stage of implementing the sustainability approach to its core the company is at, authors introduce 3 increasingly relevant types of Business Sustainability Typology (BST).

Table 2. 3 Types Business Sustainability Typology. Adopted from Dyllick & Muff (2015).

<i>Type</i>	<i>BST 1.0: Refined Shareholder Value Management</i>	<i>BST 2.0: Managing for the Triple Bottom Line-people, planet, profit</i>	<i>BST 3.0: Truly Sustainable Business</i>
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<i>Attributes</i>	Recognizes new business challenges outside the market. New challenges are integrated into existing business processes without changing business outlook. Even if sustainability concerns are reflected in the decision-making process, business objectives remain focused only on creating value for shareholders.	Value creation beyond shareholder value, including social and environmental values. Sustainability value is not a side-effect of business activities, but a result of intentionally determined goals and programs addressed at specific sustainability issues or stakeholders.	The firm understands how it can create a significant positive impact in critical and relevant areas for society and planet. Owns a widely-integrated strategy that translates sustainability challenges into business opportunities making “business sense” of societal and environmental issues. Business is looking for a way to create significant positive impact rather than attempts to minimize the negative influence from its business operations.
<i>Objectives</i>	Economic. To reduce costs and business risks, improve attractiveness, respond to new market demand, market positions, gain competitiveness, create shareholder value. Produce side-effects that positive for sustainability issues.	Invent, generate, and report on results in well-defined sustainable development areas while doing this in an economically sound and profitable manner.	Change rules of the game. Create significant positive impact rather than attempts to minimize the negative influence from its business operations.

Based on the typology presented above, it becomes evident, that Truly Sustainable Business (BST 3.0) meets and successfully resolves the challenge of integrating and balancing pursuit for economic prosperity inherent to every organization with social and environmental welfare by solving the sustainability challenges and creating value for the common good, rather than trying to minimize the harmful impact of its operations that might be influential to the stakeholders (Dyllick & Muff, 2015). At a more fundamental level, company’s aspiration towards being truly sustainable is built upon not only creating positive result at its finest; rather, it is tight up with certain expectations from its key stakeholders – customers (Elkington, 1997).

2.3 Sustainable business and customers: reaching the win-win.

Obtaining the information regarding corporate sustainability is considered to be of crucial importance for creating value for company's stakeholders and establishing their relationship with the company (Freeman et al., 2010). Most frequently, this information is presented to the corporate stakeholders in the form of sustainability or non-financial reporting. Besides repots, sustainability information is also relevant for specific stakeholders in a form of product-related information for customers (Silva et al., 2019).

Customers' awareness on corporate sustainability practices has been increasing in recent decades (Brunk & Blümelhuber, 2011). Their expectations and perceptions about responsible conduct of companies make businesses increasingly concerned about their ethical image. Perceptions about a company or a brand's sustainable impact influence consumers' appraisal of business and their further attitude towards relationship with its brands, and consequently directs their purchase behavior.

In today's business society, the issues of corporate sustainability are taking a central part, with companies increasing their concern on ethical image and customers' level of satisfaction on it. After a series of publicly disclosed high profile scandals, like Nike's unethical working conditions, Nestlé's unhealthy baby formula boycott and environmental pollution issues, Shell's numerous oil leakages, with subsequent boycotts taking place after, causing severe drops in sales and damages in corporate reputation, business has witnessed the bargaining power of consumers' expectations. Companies adjust their resources at the highest level of importance to have their activities audited and being portrayed as sustainable players on the market (Brunk & Blümelhuber, 2011).

However, discussing the relationship between business and socioenvironmental issues in the context of making progress toward sustainability assumes the "win-win" situation, where parties – business, environment and society are all gainers. Yet companies who incorporate activities to have their customers' ethical expectations met are unable to sustain such way of business for a long time as it requires a giant amount of resources and investments (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). Embedding a logic that corporate strategies with implemented prosustainability strategies assumes that economic, environmental and social needs will be addressed simultaneously.

Earlier in this work, the author discussed the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals, proposed by United Nations in 2015. It is of great importance to note that the Agenda emphasized the importance of understanding and taking the action upon the connections between policy making players in the sustainable development goals. It also essential, that it specifically highlights the high degree of importance of partnerships. This is how these two are connected:

building strategic partnerships between the actors assumes the understanding of how the interactions will look like between policy issues and representing sectors. In other words, decision makers can consider potential partners and the ways to establish such partnerships (Nilsson et al., 2018; Weiz et al, 2017).

The number of examples to illustrate such partnerships keeps growing. Nilsson and colleagues (2018) in their work on interactions between sustainable development goals provide numerous cases to demonstrate how the simultaneous goal targeting by different players leads to successful result. The lumpsum reaching for energy security, air pollution and climate change in energy systems can be achieved at slightly higher cost rather than achieving the climate change goal alone (McCollum et al., 2011). Notably, World Health Organization leveraged co-benefits between urban air quality, transport, housing, climate change and health (Chapman et al., 2016). Proven, that switching individuals to plant-based diets reduce global mortality by 6–10% whilst reducing food-related greenhouse gas emissions by up to 70% in 2050 compared to a reference scenario. Nilsson et al. (2018) examined exactly 316 of such interactions connected to sustainable development goals, and determined that 80% of the interactions were in fact positive, and only around 20% were negative.

Nonetheless, there is a key moment in this discussion: those customers, who are the stakeholders of sustainable companies will discriminate in favor of more sustainable companies and products and this will cover the foregoing costs related to corporate investments on corporate sustainability (Martinez et al., 2019). In other words, to reach the “win-win”, or strategic partnership, it is not enough for companies to persuade sustainability on their own, as they need the support of customers and expect them to make the “right” choice by pursuing sustainable consumer behavior.

2.4 Sustainable consumption: definition, frameworks and models

The term “sustainable consumption” has entered to a public attention in 1992 after the Rio Earth Summit (Seyfang, 2005). Ever since that event, the discussions addressing this topic have been gradually getting more attention from the media, followed by academics in many research fields (Pepper, Uzzell, and Jackson, 2009).

Most of the definitions are concentrated around different aspects of sustainable consumer behavior. For example, some of them address the environmental impact derived from over-consumption, while others lean towards the social impact of this term, in academic literature often referred as “pro-social” or “ethical consumption” (Black & Cherrier, 2010). For some, sustainable consumption refers to the consumption of “greener” products, also understood as green consumption (Ottman, 1993; Tanner and Kast, 2003; Moisander, 2007). Often marketers rely on this approach to develop and promote environmentally friendly choices, for instance, choose to

purchase organic and locally grown fruit and vegetables, recycle paper, seek for alternatively-formulated household cleansers, prefer eco-friendly magazines to regular ones, use energy-saving bulbs. Ultimately, marketers promote shopping “with the planet in mind” (Black and Cherrier 2010). According to Balderjahn, consumers can take responsibility for society and the environment by favoring products that minimize harm for people and nature. Sustainable or ethical consumption can therefore be subdivided into ecologically friendly as well as socially conscious consumption patterns (Balderjahn et al., 2013).

This study will entirely adopt a definition of sustainable consumption, according to which a consumer makes a choice in their decision to be a “sustainable” and “environmentally responsible” in order to improve the impact of their ecological footprint when shopping (Lee, 2014). Additionally, in this work I assume a sustainable consumer as an individual who gives preference to environmentally friendly products and avoids products that harm the environment (Chan, 2001). This individual tries to consider equally economic (in terms of personal welfare), ecological (including animal welfare) as well as social aspects across the entire consumption chain such as type and number of products, their use and disposal (Terlau & Hirsch, 2015).

A large body of academic research presented models and theories to understand sustainable consumption and shed light on attitude-behavior gap. This part of the work will discuss the most commonly used models that aim to understand the phenomenon of sustainable consumption. In order to examine and explain sustainable consumer behavior, most of academic studies concentrate on describing the individual’s underlying values, attitudes, and behavioral intentions towards sustainable environmentally friendly products (Vermeir, I., Verbeke, W, 2006; Wheale & Hinton, 2007).

Responsible Environmental Behavior model was proposed by Hines, Hungerford & Tomera in 1987. Authors argue that in spite of the plentifulness of information on topic of environmental behavior, it is still unknown which factors are the most motivating in terms of influencing the individual to make a sustainably responsible action, namely – giving preference to a more ecologically clean and sustainable product. The authors conducted an empirical environmental behavior research that had identified the characteristics useful for the meta-analysis. As a result of the analysis, several factors strongly associated with consumers’ pro-environmental behavior have been identified:

- knowledge of issues;
- knowledge of action strategies;
- locus of control;
- attitudes;
- verbal commitment;

- an individual's sense of responsibility.

The model proposed by the authors is presented below:

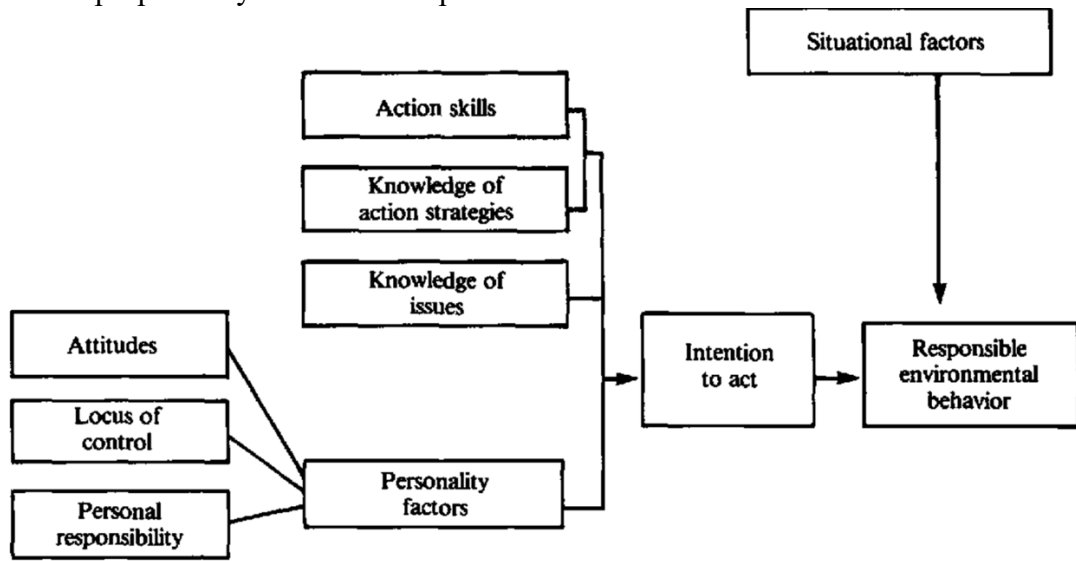


Fig. 1 Responsible Environmental Behavior model (Hines, Hungerford & Tomera, 1987)

The Value-Beliefs-Norm theory, proposed by Stern & Dietz in 1994, represents a sequence of thinking processes that refer to environment and support individual's rationale to pro-environmental behavior (PEB). The work outlines 3 dominant values that predict individual's environmental concern and action (Stern & Dietz, 1994):

- Egoistic;
- Altruistic;
- Biospheric.

Table 3. The Value Functions of Value-Beliefs-Norm theory (Stern & Dietz, 1994).

Value	Function
Egoistic	Evaluate the world in terms of personal gain, and behave in a manner that confers maximum individual utility
Altruistic	Beliefs about the importance of others' well-being
Biospheric	Aptitude to judge phenomena on "the costs or benefits to ecosystems or the biosphere"

Upon the progress of their work, authors identified that environmentalism correlates negatively with Egoistic Values. Both Altruistic and Biospheric Values orientations positively

influence environmental concern and engagement in PEBs, because they may be considered as moral beliefs about other individual's behavior with idea toward other individuals or the environment.

Another model commonly used in academia to describe the nature of consumer behavior is the Motivation-Opportunity-Abilities (MOA) model. The study was contributed by Ölander and Thøgersen in 1995. It addresses the improvements in predictive power achievable by incorporating an “ability” concept and a concept of facilitating conditions or “opportunity” to perform the behavior into the model.

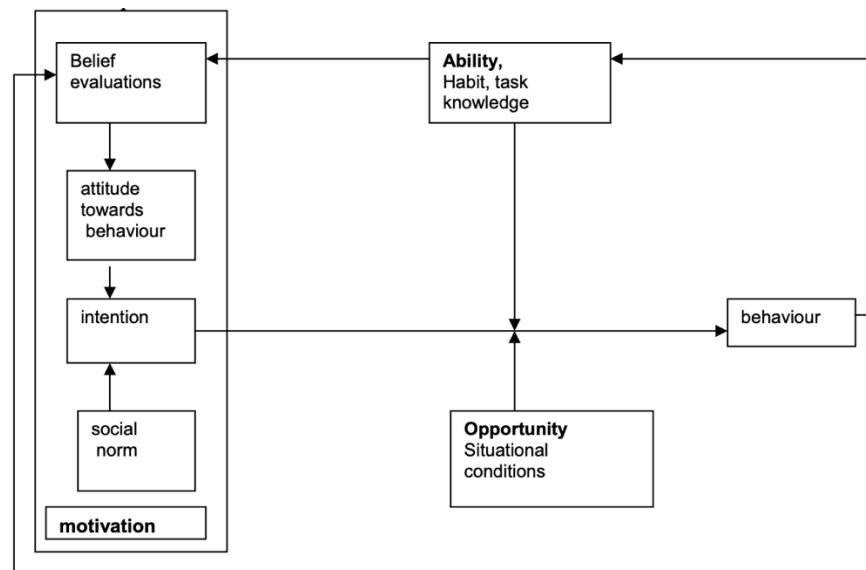


Fig. 2 The Motivation-Opportunity-Ability Model (Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995)

In this framework, the “ability” concept comprises both habit and task knowledge. Habit is considered as both an independent determinant of behavior and a moderator of intention at the same time. Authors see opportunity as “objective precondition for environmental behavior”. To sum up, the model justifies that it is essential, that situational factors is an important precondition for pro-environmental behavior (Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995).

Most commonly in academia, sustainable consumption is measured in two principal dimensions: sustainable purchase intention and behavior (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). A sustainable purchase intention assumes the variety of motivational factors that affect sustainable consumer behavior and alludes to consumers’ willingness to purchase green products. Sustainable consumer behavior, in its turn, is a complex form of ethical decision-making behavior which results in purchasing a sustainable product (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior explores sustainable consumer behavior and is considered to be the prominent theoretical approach upon which a significant number of the studies followed.

The theory represents a framework that consists of the interplay between attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, intention, and behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Fig. 3 shows the conceptual framework of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior. Left to right, it represents the following elements:

- The attitude comprises individual's expected outcome of the behavior and an associated evaluation of this outcome;
- Subjective norm presents a perceived social pressure to be engaged in the behavior;
- Perceived behavioral control accounts for an individual's perception of their ability to perform the respective behavior.

The 3 discussed elements form an intention, which is an indication of individual's willingness to be engaged in specific behavior and, according to the theory, is an immediate precursor of the behavior.

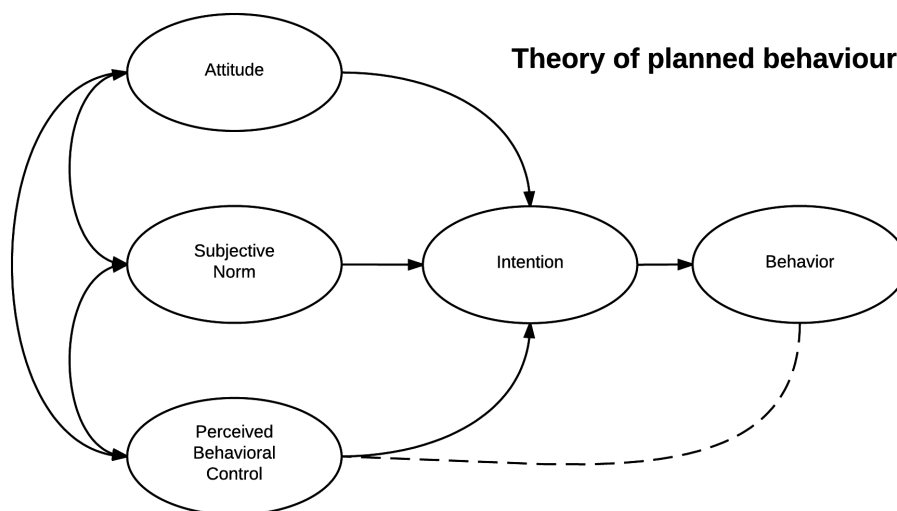


Fig. 3 Conceptual framework of Theory of Planned Behavior. Adopted from Ajzen (1991).

Overall, a lot of studies had taken upon the TPB to explore attitude, intention and actual behavior (in this case - buying an environmentally friendly product) (Arvola et al., 2008; Smith & Paladino, 2010, Tanner and Wölfling Kast, 2003). However, predictive ability of consumers' attitudes, in particular, remains to be a debatable issue in terms of sustainable consumerism; most studies that have taken upon the analyzed models showed, that individual's environmental concerns or the presence of attitudinal variables actually fail to capture their green purchasing behavior (Bamberg, 2003; Hines et al., 1987; Tanner, 1999). Turning back to the Theory of Planned Behavior, one of the most frequently used models for sustainable consumption, as a result of an astonishing amount of studies, it was not considered as a suitable model that would clearly explain consumers' ethical behavior since it did not take into account the consumer affective

element that was later found to put a dramatic influence on the sustainable consumer behavior (Magnusson et al., 2003; Padel & Foster, 2005). More, it did not account for the consumers' habitual buying behavior and failed to explain the consumers' decision-making process during the product purchase as well as their post-purchase behavior (Padel & Foster, 2005; Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995). The observed attitude-intention-behavior models also ignore external effects of the environmental and situational factors on consumer purchase behavior.

Ultimately, the principal goal of all models analyzed in this section of the work was to discover, whether a customer who hypothetically agrees to buy a sustainable product will translate their readiness to make an actual purchase of the same product at the store. The majority of academic works revealed, that the relationship between consumers' positive attitude towards purchasing more sustainable products and the actual purchase behavior that they demonstrated at stores is very weak, which is known as an attitude-behavior gap (Tanner & Wölfling Kast, 2003).

2.5 The attitude-behavior gap and barriers to sustainable consumer behavior.

As it has been identified in the previous parts of this work, expecting and encouraging customers to stick to sustainable consumer behavior when purchasing goods is an important part of the strategy of all companies involved into sustainable development. Over the last decades, the encouragement to sustainable consumption has been in the focus of many researchers. More importantly, this encouragement has been performed under the unconditional assumption that the increasing "green", or pro-environmental values of the consumers will result in growing sustainable consumption (Young et al., 2010; Balderjahn, 2013). However, it has been revealed, that the actual purchasing behavior of individuals quite often deviates from "green" attitudes. In other words, individuals claiming their positive pro-environmental attitudes are unable to translate such an attitude in their purchasing behavior (namely, choosing a more sustainable version of the product over a less sustainable). This phenomenon is called an attitude-behavior gap (Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Lee, 2014; Young et al., 2010).

Numerous studies on green attitudes towards sustainable consumerism have been conducted. The surveys report that global consumers not only prefer sustainable products but are willing to pay more for them, including 73 percent of millennials (Curtin, 2018). Nielsen 2015 Sustainability Report indicates that 66 percent of consumers all over the world claim they are willing to pay more for sustainable brands (Nielsen, 2015). Unilever's 2018 Making Purpose Pay global report on sustainable living revealed that more than 50 percent of customers would like to buy brands that are more sustainable, however, only 33 percent of consumers already purchases products with sustainability in mind and a further 21 percent do not currently but would like to (Unilever, 2018). In EU, 89 percent of citizens believe that purchasing green products can make a

difference with respect to the environment, and 95 per cent agree that purchasing green products is “the right thing to do” (European Commission, 2013).

As a result of different surveys, 30 to 50 percent of consumers demonstrate their intention to buy sustainable products, however, at the same time the market share of these goods is often less than 5% of the total sales (Carrington et al., 2010; Young et al., 2010). Looking at the Greendex’s Consumer Choice and Environment survey, it becomes evident that the percentage of respondents who assume themselves as being “green” deviates significantly from the actual “green” customers who live in given country.

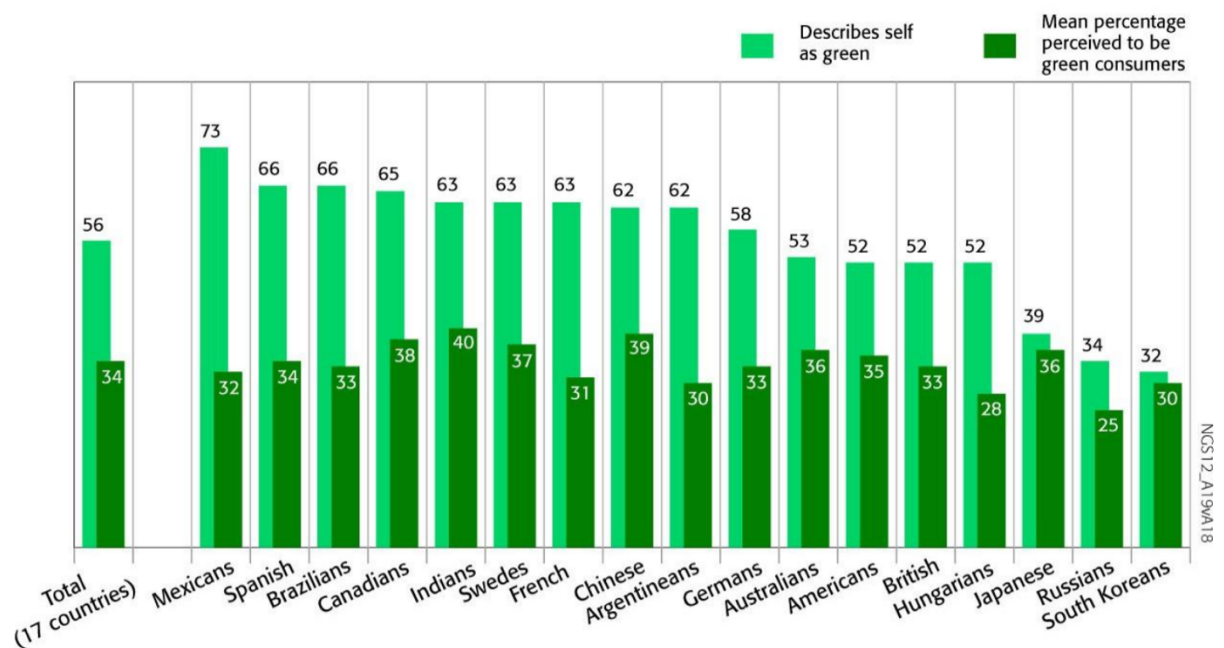


Fig. 4 Attitude-Behavior Gap (Green attitude consumers VS average actual green consumer behavior, %). Adopted from Greendex Consumer Choice and the Environment Survey, 2012.

In Russia, as it can be seen from the graph, there is 34 percent of consumers describing themselves as “green”, however, the mean percentage of actual green consumer perceived to be living in Russia differs by 9 percent from the number of self-declared individuals with “green” purchasing habits (Greendex, 2012). In 2018, Russian non-profit organization “Ecological Union” in partnership with eco consulting agency GREENS published the results of study on buying behavior of sustainable consumers, namely Russian citizens interested in environmentally friendly products. Online survey targeted only residents of St. Petersburg and Moscow; 1600 individuals submitted their response. As a result of the study, it was identified that 90 percent of all the respondents considered themselves “green” or “ethical” consumers, who stick to sustainable purchasing habits. However, only 23 percent of respondents were actually aware of attributes, that distinguish a sustainable product from non-sustainable (as a main criterion of research, sustainable

product had to be marked with special eco label) and bought that specific product, proving that claimed “green” consumers do not actually stick to sustainable purchasing behavior when shopping (Recyclemag, 2018). According to PWC’s 2018 research on Russian market, 83 percent of respondents living all over Russia claim to “adhere to the principle of sustainability” when making purchases, with the sustainable products market share of 44 percent (of total goods sold) (PWC, 2018). In result, it is possible to arrive to conclusion that the attitude-behavior gap is substantially present at the Russian market.

The attitude-behavior gap between stated and actual purchase behavior of individuals has led to an exhaustive body of academic research that aims to understand it. M. Carrigan & A. Attalla in their work examine the presence of consumers’ interest on sustainable consumer behavior and investigate the effect of well-performed and poor-performed ethical self-positioning of the brand on purchasing behavior of consumers. By holding discussions in focus groups, authors conclude that even though consumers are more sophisticated today with their choice of the product, i.e. aware of environmental concerns, this is not necessarily translated into their actual purchasing behavior which favors sustainable products (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

A 2014 study of M. Carrington and colleagues aims to investigate the underlying nature of sustainable purchase attitude-behavior gap in context of consumers daily live habits. By using multiple qualitative methods, it explores the attitude-behavior gap in shopping behavior and uses interpretive approach. The result of analysis reveals 4 factors that affect the ethical purchase attitude-behavior gap: (1) prioritization of ethical concerns; (2) formation of plans/habits; (3) willingness to commit and sacrifice; and (4) modes of shopping behavior (Carrington et al., 2014).

Chatzidakis and colleagues explore how neutralism (techniques applied by individuals which can insulate them from self-blame and the blame of others) can explain customers’ lack of commitment in buying fair-trade product, even though initially they identify the fair-trade buying as an ethical concern. Their exploratory research results in illustrative examples of the neutralization technique could be used in the fair-trade consumer context. The research propositions describe the role of neutralization in attempt to explain the attitude-behavior gap in relations to customers’ ethical (fair-trade) purchase (Chatzidakis et al., 2007).

To summarize, a review of the studies and researches on consumer behavior and attitude-behavior gap reveals a concordant pessimism regarding the capability of general environmental attitudes to predict the sustainable purchasing behavior (Berger and Corbin, 1992), and was called into further research why consumers do not translate their green concerns and intentions into an actual purchase of a sustainable product. Therefore, a great number of recent studies have investigated the presence of specific barriers (i.e. purchasing green products often involves high

monetary and non-monetary costs) that may prevent consumers who are aware of environmental issues from sustainable behavior at the store (Bray et al., 2011).

In a literature review of over 30 empirical studies available in scientific literature databases, the most commonly met barriers to sustainable consumer behavior have been identified. These “barriers” impede or complicate consumers’ process of purchasing green products.

Higher prices.

It was found in 10 studies, that higher product price outweighs consumer’s ethical considerations and widens the attitude-behavior gap in case of purchase of sustainable products (Connell, 2010; Gleim et al., 2013; Padel & Foster, 2005; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Economic resources lacking by consumers are found to intensify the effect of price and act as a barrier to purchase of sustainable products (Connell, 2010). High price sensitivity also was found to negatively affect green purchase behavior of consumers (Ma et al., 2013). It is thus clear that higher price negatively influences green purchasing behavior.

Lack of availability of green products.

Numerous studies implicate limited availability of a product had to have a negative influence on consumer ethical purchase behavior (e.g., Young et al., 2010) Most studies showed that limited availability and difficulties in accessing green products were major barriers to purchasing environmentally sustainable products (Padel & Foster, 2005; Young et al., 2010). Consumers do not appreciate the fact that time they spend to find a sustainable product tends to be longer, giving preference to easily accessible products (Young et al., 2010). Further, consumers generally look for convenience in purchasing (Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002; Padel & Foster, 2005) and avoid behaviors that require higher perceived efforts (Gossling et al., 2005) Overall, it can be concluded that limited availability and inconvenience in procuring products act as barriers and increase the gap between consumer positive attitude and actual behavior towards purchasing green products.

Lack of trust/confidence in green product.

In the context of sustainable purchasing, trust is defined as a “belief or expectation about the environmental performance of such products” (Chen & Lobo, 2013). 6 studies were found observe the effect trust has on sustainable consumer behavior. As a result, studies suggest that lack of consumer trust and confidence in green claims and characteristics of sustainable products is a significant barrier impeding customers from purchasing ethical products (Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002, Gupta & Ogden, 2009, Krystallis et al., 2008). Ultimately, lack of consumer trust in product acts as a barrier towards sustainable purchase behavior.

Lack of information.

Consumers tend to have a specific need for product information. On one hand, consumers feel insufficiently informed about the environmental and social performance of sustainable products and have a high degree of ‘cognitive dissonance’. The latter leads to mental stress when consumers have to choose between two equally attractive goods (Koths & Holl, 2012). Lack of information was identified to negatively affect green purchase behavior (Connell, 2010; Padel & Foster, 2005).

Habits.

A negative influence of habit on consumer green purchase behavior was found in some studies (Padel and Foster, 2005, Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). Furthermore, habit is claimed to be a significant obstacle to purchasing green products (Tsakiridou et al., 2008). Habit and consumer’s purchasing behavior in the past indicate consumer preferences and influence their purchasing behavior, making it hard to change.

Table 4 Studies on barriers impeding sustainable consumer behavior. Adopted from Joshi & Rahman (2015).

Barrier	Studies	Nº of studies
Higher prices	Magnusson et al., 2001; Fotopoulos et al, 2002; Gossling et al., 2005; Padel & Foster, 2005; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Tsakiridou et al., 2008; Connell, 2010; Chan & Wong; 2012; Jin Ma et al., 2013; Gleim et al., 2013.	10
Lack of availability	Bray et al., 2011; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Carrington et al., 2014; Gleim et al., 2013; Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002; Padel & Foster, 2005; Tsakiridou et al., 2008; Connell, 2010; Lee, 2011; Young et al, 2010.	10

Lack of trust	Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002; Gossling et al., 2005; Padel and Foster, 2005; Mostafa, 2006; Krystallis et al., 2008; Tsakiridou et al., 2008; Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Chen & Lobo, 2013.	6
Lack of information	Bang et al., 2000; Mostafa, 2006; Hamzaoui-Essoussi & Zahaf, 2009; Koths & Holl, 2012; Gleim et al., 2013; Kang et al., 2013; Kanchanapibul et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2014; Nittala, 2014.	9
Habits	Magnusson et al., 2001; Padel and Foster, 2005; Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006; Tsakiridou, Boutsouki, Zotos, & Mattas, 2008.	4

Even though previous research provides an extensive body of data indicating the overall presence of consumers' environmental concern, the covert influence of internal attitudes on purchase behavior does not explain why sustainable products account for such a low market share.

In spite of differences in the conceptualization of sustainable purchased behavior, the reviewed works primarily concentrate around similar research areas: what factors are affecting consumers' conversion from pro-sustainable attitude to actual behavior and to what extent do they bring their influence.

Consumers are expected to change their behavior or sacrifice their wallets to achieve a more sustainable lifestyle (Shove, 2010, Devinney et al., 2010). Frameworks which rely on values, beliefs, attitudes, and intentions, are primarily used in the research. Thus, change is thought to be determined mainly by values, beliefs, and attitudes, which then drive behavior and choice. Contexts, including habits, routines and personal capabilities, are treated as an external causal

variable and are ignored (Shove, 2010). As a result, the majority of studies adopt either attitude-based and/or choice-based models as their methodological framework.

However, the fact of existence of attitude-behavior gaps in research studies justifies that the attitude and value-based behavioral approaches offer insufficient explanations of the complexity of sustainable decision-making and behavior. Research method structures limit researchers in getting clear and consistent answers from respondents (Shove, 2010, Devinney et al., 2010). Moreover, there is the issue of social desirability bias, which often leads to overstated values and inaccurate interpretations of findings (Shove, 2010).

Research gap: none of the studies observed in this review of scientific literature have provided a material representation of customers' decision justifying their choice not to purchase sustainable products, which indicates a gap in present research. The clearest way to understand green consumerism is by examining one's consumption behavior as a series of purchase decisions and actions (Peattie, 1999). Looking at sustainable consumer behavior in this way leads to a micro focus on individual purchases (Young et al., 2010). It can be clearly seen that research on consumer choice and preferences to conduct a sustainable purchase (e.g. willingness to pay or buy) needs to move away from an attitude-based framework towards other research methods that have a customer-centric approach and trace their emotions, decisions, experiences and actions, which this work aims to do.

A tool frequently used by marketing and customer success specialists for representation of customer's purchase decisions and actions is called customer journey map. By aligning customer's purchase stages and his emotional journey with all the interactions on the way to purchase of product (as well as its post-purchase use), marketing scholars and corporate marketing teams are able to get specific knowledge that allows them to prioritize different barriers in accordance with each stage of a customer journey; understand, how customers will behave at specific time and in environment on the way to their purchase; analyze, how can they can overcome barriers emerging on the way, and thus target their decisions in favor of sustainable brands.

Therefore, the remaining part of this study seeks to:

- Explore consumers' mental representation of decision-making process on all stages of their customer journey, allocate it with barriers impeding them from turning their sustainable purchase intention into actual purchase behavior and customers' actions.
- Analyze the barriers by assigning them to a certain stage of customer journey and provide business implications for marketers.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research method

Considering the research's main objective, it was decided that an introspective qualitative approach (the thorough examination of individual's conscious thoughts) would be the best-fitting method for this study. The introspection is the process of observing and reflecting on one's thoughts, feelings, motives, reasoning processes and emotional states in order to determine the ways these processes determine one's certain behavior (in our case, buying behavior) (Nunan, 1992, p. 115). Moreover, giving the preference to qualitative research can may help to increase the depth of understanding of consumers' behavior by exploring an array of detailed information (Patton, 2002). Ultimately, the qualitative method of in-depth semi-structured interview is considered to be the best-working when building an effective customer-journey map (Rosenbaum et al., 2017), that is used in this study as a tool to systematize and project the data obtained.

In qualitative approach, the author of this study went through 2 stages:

- 1) In-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interview method was chosen in order to understand different types and stages of sustainable consumer behaviors.
- 2) Point-of-sales observations and consecutive immediate interviews. This method was chosen to explore more closely consumer's behavior seconds after them having the First Moment of Truth and close those gaps in their behavior, that were derived after analyzing data obtained from in-depth interviews.

3.2 Selected product category

This study focuses on the following goods of household cleaning product category:

- laundry detergents;
- floor cleaners;
- window cleaners;
- cleaning gels for kitchen appliances.

The decision to include in this study environmentally friendly household cleaning goods can be explained by the need to distinguish between those consumers who pick sustainable goods for the sake of satisfying their needs without damaging the environment by contributing towards a more sustainable world (Shamdasami et al., 1993) and those, who give preference to organic or natural products, where motivation might be more health-related, rather than environmental (Magnusson et al., 2003; Moser, 2016).

The distinction between a regular and a sustainable household cleaning product was decided to be defined in accordance to the fact of presence of eco labels on the package (see full list of eco labels relevant in this study in Appendix 2).

It is important to note, that previous academic research on green purchasing barriers mostly concentrates around so-called “high-involvement” products, such as cars, home appliance and electricity (Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Pinkse & Dommisse, 2009). Author of this work believes that green purchasing behavior can be observed more effectively when a customer is interacting with a number of low-involvement products – namely, those that are purchased on a regular basis and do not require a specific financial contribution or an extraordinary purpose to buy them (e.g. moving to a new house).

3.3 Target

This qualitative study targeted Russian households that purchase household cleaners on a regular basis. Overall, Russian households represent a good context for analyzing customers’ sustainable purchase journey and identifying impeding barriers, with 83 percent of Russian consumers claiming their consideration of the principle of sustainability, however, with only 44 percent of these consumers actually purchasing sustainable goods (PWC, 2018).

Cowe and Williams (2001) in their research on green purchasing habits have come up with ethical segmentation of customers, dividing them into 3 groups according to their green attitudes, green products purchase intentions and actual purchase behavior:

- 1) Only 10 percent of shoppers are considered to be truly sustainable. They are passionate about environmental issues and **go further** than the rest of population when pursuing their values. When buying products, they tend to be more interested in social and environmental issues than in brands. They automatically look for eco labels and trace companies’ reputations, hence buy or avoid certain products. Many of them are active campaigners on ethical issues. They can be defined as “brand-aware youngsters who may become the ethical vanguard of tomorrow”.
- 2) 60 percent – more than half of population is more active. They definitely are aware of environmental issues and **might** be ready to translate their concern into making a sustainable purchase – however, only if the issue is obvious and the information is readily available. This is the most heterogeneous group, comprising individuals with various sets of barriers (subjectivist consumers).
- 3) Around 30 percent of population in equal measure can be either concerned/not concerned on environmental issues – due to large amount of information they meet daily, it is difficult to trace their concern change. However, they are **not able** to take their concerns to the stores in significant numbers.

In conducting data gathering, it was important to collect responses from all 3 groups of customers. The reason to that is the fact that individual purchasing behavior is very unpredictable, with constantly changing decisions taking place. Even though individual may seem as belonging

to a certain group discussed above, they still can show actions indistinctive to their group patterns. Further research in this work showed, that barriers may occur even on the journey of customers who belong to the 3rd, most sustainable purchase behavior group.

3.4 Data collection

Stage 1. In-depth semi-structured interviews.

The author employed in-depth interviews for data collection to explore consumers' actual purchasing behavior at all stages of customer journey and reasoning for this behavior. Author believes that this was the better option for data collection than questionnaires, which tend to collect data on consumers' behavioral aims rather than actual behavior.

On basis of a comprehensive literature review, the interview guide has been developed, consisting of several parts, or directions. Throughout the process of interview, questions were asked regarding the barriers, which respondent could have come across at all stages of customer journey: the need recognition, product info search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, post-purchase use and disposal of products within the 3 targeted groups of respondents. Additionally, personal data was gathered in accordance with Characteristics of sustainable consumer persona-building aspects (see Table 5 for full list of aspects). Probing moderator technique was used in each interview to ensure equal aligning all of the content obtained from all interviewees and achieving meaningful responses (questions such as “Why do you say that?”, “That’s interesting, can you tell me more?”, “At what point do you feel your relationship with Product X started to deteriorate?”, etc.) (Malhotra & Birks, 2006).

The study was based on primary data generated from 21 respondents. 21 Russian households were contacted with a request to participate in this study. The households were asked to pick one member who is more likely to go shopping for household cleaning goods on a regular basis. The interviews took place in February-March 2020, each lasting between 60-90 minutes via FaceTime and Telegram voice call. To avoid bias, interviewees were not given any information regarding the aim of the study before and during the interview process.

Stage 2. Point-of-sales observations and consecutive immediate interviews.

After obtaining data from in-depth interviews, author was able to create customer persona profiles and a primary version of customer journey maps allocated with each persona and containing barriers to sustainable purchase behavior. However, several cases have taken place, where interviewees could not explain their purchasing behavior in a particular situation. Such cases of information lack resulted in gaps on the customer journey maps, which had to be eliminated.

To close these gaps, it became evident, that observations at the points of sales of household cleaning goods and consecutive immediate interviews were in need. The author observed

consumer choices at the point of purchase decision during the First Moment of Truth – 3-7 seconds after a customer first recognized a product on a store shelf. Marketers have the best opportunity of “catching” a browser who is converting into a buyer by appealing to their senses, values and emotions (P&G, 2006). The distinction between regular and sustainable household cleaner product was supported by eco labels on the package of product and by green enclosure of the shelf section holding green products.

The observation took place at 3 supermarkets of the same retail chain, situated in 3 different areas of Saint Petersburg, Russia. The data was obtained in March, 2020, a few weeks before global pandemic started (thus, change factor in customer behavior associated with growing demand for cleaning and disinfecting products can be considered as irrelevant in this study). Moreover, if participant gave preference to a certain product only because it was under promotion (price was considerably reduced), they were excluded from the observation. The observation took place under time sampling method (McLeod, 2015): the observer would enter the store during 7 consecutive days at 12 P.M., 3 P.M., and 6 P.M. Each observation lasted for 1 hour. During this time period, a random selection approach was used to ensure all potential customers had an equal chance of being interviewed; the participant had to be at least 18 years old. Overall, 78 participants

The data were collected in the aisles of the supermarkets in two steps.

- 1) Observing and documenting a consumer’s pick up one of the products under the study (product type: laundry detergent, floor cleaner, window cleaners, cleaning gel for kitchen appliances and the version chosen: “regular” or “sustainable”).
- 2) Interviewing the customer as they put the product in the shopping basket and moved on from the aisle (no change of product choice has occurred during the observation).

4. Data analysis. Customer journey map

The analysis of the qualitative data was aided by the customer journey mapping technique. Customer journey map is a powerful strategic tool for marketers and a visual depiction of how seeing customer's interactions at each touchpoint can improve or lighten customer's way to the product (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). In essence, it is a graph which illustrates steps customer goes through, a visual representation of the "journey" to achieve a goal (or drop off). The main value that it gives to the marketers is that by tracing all of the stages of customer journey, it becomes evident, how to help customers achieve the desired goal as quickly as possible (in case of this study, purchase a sustainable product). This tool facilitates the full reconstruction of customer's decision-making process throughout all stages of their purchase, their emotional journey, their actions and, in particular, barriers that impeded customer reaching the set goal (purchase of a sustainable product) – in other words, it is possible to gain insight to the full customer experience. It is particularly suitable for qualitative approach (as a visual representation of one's conscious thoughts) that was adopted in this study (Court et al., 2009; Skinner, 2010).

In applying the customer journey mapping technique, the author of this work followed Copper's (American digital consultancy company) 2019 field study on creating a customer journey map.

Qualitative data analysis aided by customer journey mapping was performed in following stages:

At the first step, the clear goals for a customer journey map were set.

The ultimate goal of this work is by tracing individuals' purchasing experience and behavioral processes through all stages of their customer journey, identify barriers impeding them making a purchase of sustainable product.

At the second step, by analyzing data collected from in-depth interviews, buyer personas were created and described.

Buyer personas are research-based archetypal (modeled) representations of who the buyers are, what they are trying to accomplish, what goals drive their behavior, how they think, how they buy, and why they make buying decisions. Essentially, buyer personas are stereotyped profiles of the "average customers," based on data gathered about their behavior (Copper, 2019).

After conducting the intertextual analysis of data obtained from in-depth interviews with representatives of Russian household who regularly shop for household cleaning products, author identified 3 persona types (in accordance with Cowe and Williams (2001) ethical segmentation groups):

- 1) Group 1 (truly sustainable consumers) – persona type 1: Wholesome consumer.

2) Group 2 (subjectivist consumers) – persona type 2: Fluctuating consumer.

3) Group 3 (unsustainable consumers) – persona type 3: Insular consumer.

Based on interview takeaways, author allocated each of 21 participants to one of three persona types: Wholesome, Fluctuating and Insular.

To develop byer personas, author considered following aspects: biological (e.g. gender, age, physical appearance), sociological (e.g. social class, education), and psychological (e.g. personality traits, self-realization, lifestyle) based on the suggestions of Brangier and Bornet (2011) and Onel et al. (2018). However, many scholars suggest that socio-demographic and value-based variables are not particularly useful as typologies for persona segmentation. Instead, behavioral or lifestyle segmentation might offer better insights into identifying potential consumers (Bangsa & Schlegelmilch, 2020).

Table 5 Characteristics of sustainable consumer persona-building aspects. Adopted from Brangier & Bornet (2011), Onel et al. (2018).

Components	Examples
Persona identity synopsis (sustainable consumer persona profile)	Name, photo, illustration Email address. Current address Quotes, Tagline Physiological aspects: sex, age, height, and weight Sociological aspects. Social role. Social class. Occupation. Education. Academic background. Leisure activities. Hobbies. Psychological aspects. Character and personality. Intelligence. Specific knowledge, skills, abilities. Learning style. Income. Housing type. Geographic aspects. World region. City. Urban or rural. Climate.
Attitudes and behaviors in relation to sustainable consumption (or non-consumption)	Social influences. Fears (social, environmental, financial). Frustrations. Beliefs, attitudes, and motivations. Needs. Perceived barriers. Awareness. Life goals. Emotional goals. Use goals. Experience goals. Succinct narrative story. Attitude toward product/behavior. Emotional characteristic of the user.
Contexts: Stages of sustainable consumption (need recognition, search for product info, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, post purchase use, disposal) of household cleaning products	Surrounding environment. Task context. Engagement with the sustainable action. Interaction with the product and/or behavior: frequency, regularity, predictability. Context of actions: home, office, public, private, etc. Characteristic of acquisition, use, and post use. Specific difficulties. Security, legal restrictions, robustness, maintenance, learnability.

Persona 1. Wholesome consumer.

PROJECT: Persona evaluation PERSONA: Eugenie

NAME

Eugenie

PROPORTION OUT
OF ALL CONSUMERS



TYPE

**Wholesome
Consumer**



Influencers

- Values
- Making impact
- Understanding concept of interdependency

Sustainable habits

Choosing sustainable brands



Energy and water saving



Reuse and recycle



Frustrations

- All household cleaners in Russia are tested on animals, even though this fact is being concealed. Almost impossible to be cruelty-free
- When most of people hear "vegan" or "eco", they automatically perceive the product as inferior

Motivations

- Making world a better place
- Different alternatives of info sources
- Serving as an example and encouraging other individuals to sustainable consumption
- Opportunity to support sustainable brands and spread awareness

Demographic

♀ Female 24 years

📍 St. Petersburg

Single

Interior architect

Lifestyle

Eugenie tries to live in harmony with all things and beings surrounding her. A passionate activist, volunteer and vegan lifestyle adherent, she attributes her values and ethics to making all of her life decisions.

Quote

“I will pick a sustainable version of a product even if it means paying more, as I want to support an ethical brand with my own money. It costs me nothing to spend some time researching on a product's ethical rating. Sustainable cleaners are equally effective, if not more.”

Engagement with sustainable consumption

As a consumer, Eugenie understands her place in the world around her, her contribution to environment and society. She checks on brands before making a choice and rejects unethical brands, engages in community and public service and prefers to financially contribute to issues that matter to her. Eugenie reduces her negative impact on the planet by sticking to vegan lifestyle, consuming less, choosing alternative transportation means, separating her waste and giving a second life to old things by donating them. Eugenie's values on more sustainable living are well aligned with her expectations on brands' objectives, such as transparency, being cruelty-free and eliminating negative impact on environment and society.

Interaction with household cleaners

When shopping for household cleaners, Eugenie first researches product's sustainable ratings. Eco labelling plays critical role in her choice, however, she trusts only a limited number of labels that she learns from influencers she follows, as they constantly conduct inspections on brands' activity. She is always open to trying new brands in case some that she usually uses are missing in the store, but takes time to check on information - in particular, whether it is cruelty-free. She will pick sustainable product even if there is a price premium, but not a ridiculous amount. Eugenie claims that choosing sustainable cleaners does not compromise quality or effectiveness as they work even better than regular products. She is aware of product's non-toxic properties, however, admits that environmental impact is of bigger importance. She aims to prolongate the use time of product and turns in the package for recycling.

Persona type 2. Fluctuating consumer.

PROJECT: Persona evaluation PERSONA: Alex

NAME

Alex

PROPORTION OUT
OF ALL CONSUMERS



60 %

TYPE

**Fluctuating
Consumer**



Demographic

♂ Male 37 years
📍 St. Petersburg
Married
Project manager

Influencers

- Pursue value for money
- Feeling overwhelmed by the idea of sustainability
- Barriers

Sustainable habits

Choosing sustainable brands



Energy and water saving



Reuse and recycle



Frustrations

- Many brands simply greenwash consumers' minds, not giving them any value with their "new" product
- If one switches to sustainable products, it will not contribute to anything, as everyone around still keeps acting unsustainably
- Often, greener habits require too much of a contribution
- In our culture we were not raised with sustainability in mind, we know literally nothing, and it is not easy to learn

Motivations

- Trending adoption of sustainable lifestyle
- Getting less harmful products means positive contribution to one's living
- Pride for making even inconsistent contributions

Quote

“
I prefer rational approach when I decide what to spend my money at. I am ready to pay extra if it means getting 100% value for what I pay, which doesn't happen quite often, honestly.
I would like to act more sustainably, but I don't see any ways appearing clear to me. Sometimes I feel ashamed I don't contribute to environment, so I can purchase something eco-labelled to feel less guilty. For me it's fine to do good things, such as not wasting on the street. I am open to support initiatives that would make sense to me.
”

Lifestyle

Alex is active, dedicated and sympathizing person who loves to challenge himself and expand personal horizons - travel, work out, find new hobbies. He is conscious of decisions he makes when it comes to work and personal life. His daily habits are consistent with his understanding of common sense in things. Alex is ready to engage into sustainable habits if the issue is obvious and solution is readily available - for example, separate waste collection right by his building.

Engagement with sustainable consumption

Alex sees himself as an individual that occasionally contributes to sustainability by purchasing products he considers green. He is aware of numerous environmental and social problems humanity is facing and thinks that action needs to be taken, but does not have any idea on how it attributes to him in personal context. Alex understands the product packaging is subject to recycling, however, is ready to do it when means are available and not much of an effort will be taken.

Interaction with household cleaners

When Alex runs out of a product, he is open to evaluate new alternatives and positively responds to triggers, e.g. recommendation or advertisement. When at a store, he may read the info on the package, but he rarely allows any extra time to look for more detailed information on product that's captured his attention. However, he might purchase the sustainable version if he is concerned on properties that definitely make impact, e.g. containing toxic ingredients. Alex understands the purpose of Recyclable product label, yet sometimes he may refuse purchasing a product because he feels an obligation to take action which would complicate his life. Alex can clearly see most of the barriers that impede his being truly sustainable, but decides to take action only when he recognizes a distinct reason to do so. Due to that, Alex often is unable to see himself as part of larger community or understand interdependency within the concept of sustainability. Still, he is open to take an action when there is an incentive.

Persona type 3. Insular consumer.

PROJECT: Persona evaluation PERSONA: Michael

NAME

Michael

PROPORTION OUT
OF ALL CONSUMERS



30 %

TYPE

**Insular
Consumer**



Influencers

- Time
- Close-mindedness: no one is doing it, why should I?
- Barriers

Motivations

- Seeing green product properties as a personal benefit (e.g. "Less harm for your family" sticker claim)
- Fear of impact that chemicals bring to own health

Sustainable habits

Choosing sustainable brands



Energy and water saving



Reuse and recycle



Frustrations

- Every so-called improvement is another way to make money out of customers
- Even if product is claimed to be less harmful, it still is full of toxic and probably dangerous ingredients
- If I make extra effort and I don't see a clear result, I am not ready to waste my time

Demographic

♂ Male 56 years
📍 St. Petersburg
Married
Construction engineer

Quote

“I would just look for something that I commonly use and trust to. I don't think that product innovation by any means is a benefit for the customer rather than another way to increase corporate profits. Aren't all cleaning products unsustainable as they are just pure chemicals?”

Lifestyle

Michael is a hard-working and sociable individual, who pursues comfort and stability in his life. He gladly engages in family gatherings and active leisure. His attitudes towards commodities is often materialistic, as he believes that more is better - e.g. owning several cars or electronic devices is perceived as a good indicator of one's wealth. His way of making decisions is often compulsory, as he often checks with his close network of friends and colleagues in order to get new ideas.

Engagement with sustainable consumption

Most of the time, Michael stays pretty far from environmental issues, concentrating his attention on social ones - however, they often do not go beyond the level of his local community. He believes, that he does not have to hold responsibility for sustainability problems, as they are caused by industrial growth, and that change is to be taken in global context. Though he is unaware of concept of responsible consumption, he sometimes engages in resource-saving activities, such as using energy-saving lamps or reducing amount of washing machine loadings, but does it for the sake of personal financial benefit. When he shops, he looks for the lowest price possible and readily buys products of lower quality as he knows that soon he will re-buy the new ones.

Interaction with household cleaners

When buying household chemicals, Michael acts unconsciously, allowing as less time as possible for product choice, as he sees all products having equal properties. He mostly sticks to only one brand that satisfies his needs in effectiveness, but does not allow for searching for some more information regarding brand's activities, considering it unnecessary. His attitude towards brand ethics varies from neutral to negative, as he envisions ethics as a set of marketing activities that lead only to economic benefits of companies. He views sustainable product options as being of lower quality, less aesthetically pleasing, and more expensive. Sometimes Alex associates sustainability with femininity, leading him to avoid sustainable options. He is considerably affected by social influence, and needs a push within surrounding community to make a purchase of a sustainable version. However, after getting this incentive from outside, he readily buys an ethical version without having any doubt on his decision.

The third step assumed identifying different stages buyers go through to achieve their goals (horizontal axis), and identifying customer experiences (vertical axis).

Stages of customer journey. Horizontal axis of Customer Journey Map:

- Need recognition.
- Search for product information.
- Evaluation of alternatives.
- Purchase.
- Post purchase use.
- Disposal.

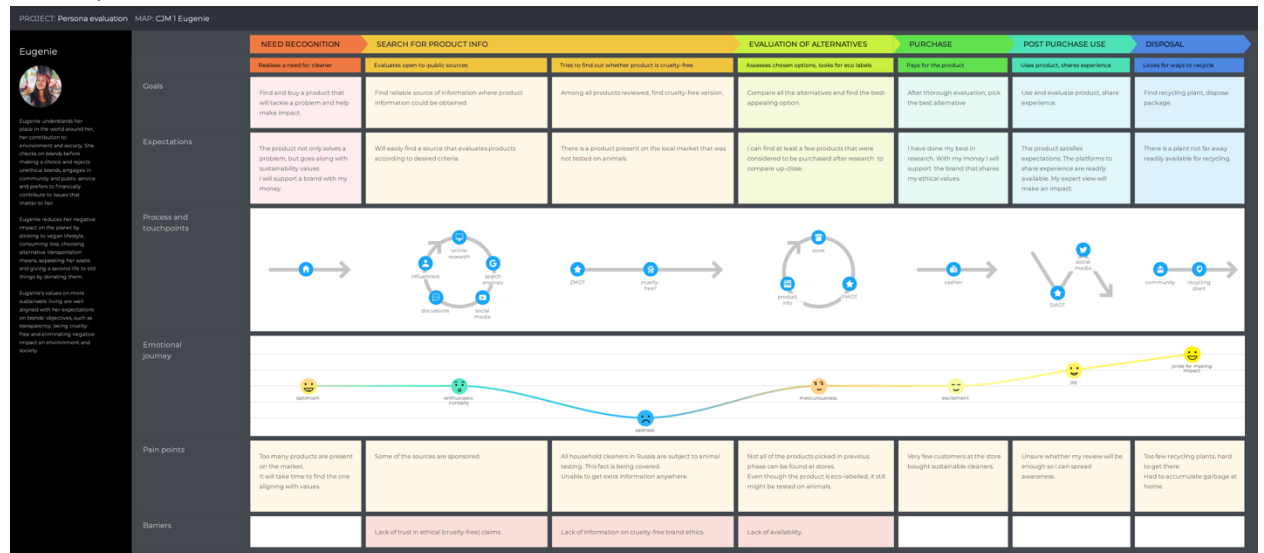
Customer's experiences. Vertical axis of Customer Journey Map:

- Actions.
- Goals.
- Expectations.
- Processes and touchpoints.
- Emotional journey.
- Pain points.
- Barriers.

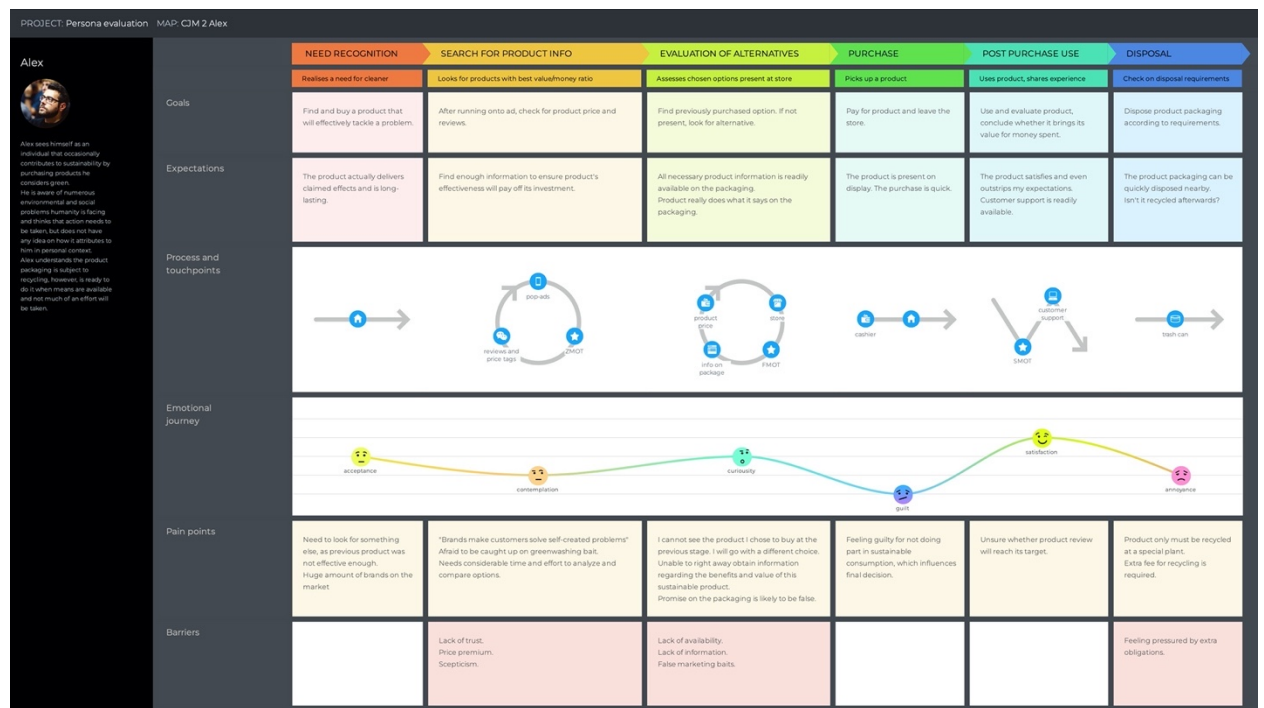
Two final steps assumed creating a customer journey map grid and filling it in with information obtained from in-depth interviews, point-of-sales observations and immediate interviews as well as allocating barriers that inhibit customers from making a sustainable purchase on the map.

For a better quality and resolution of the images, please see PDF files submitted together with this work.

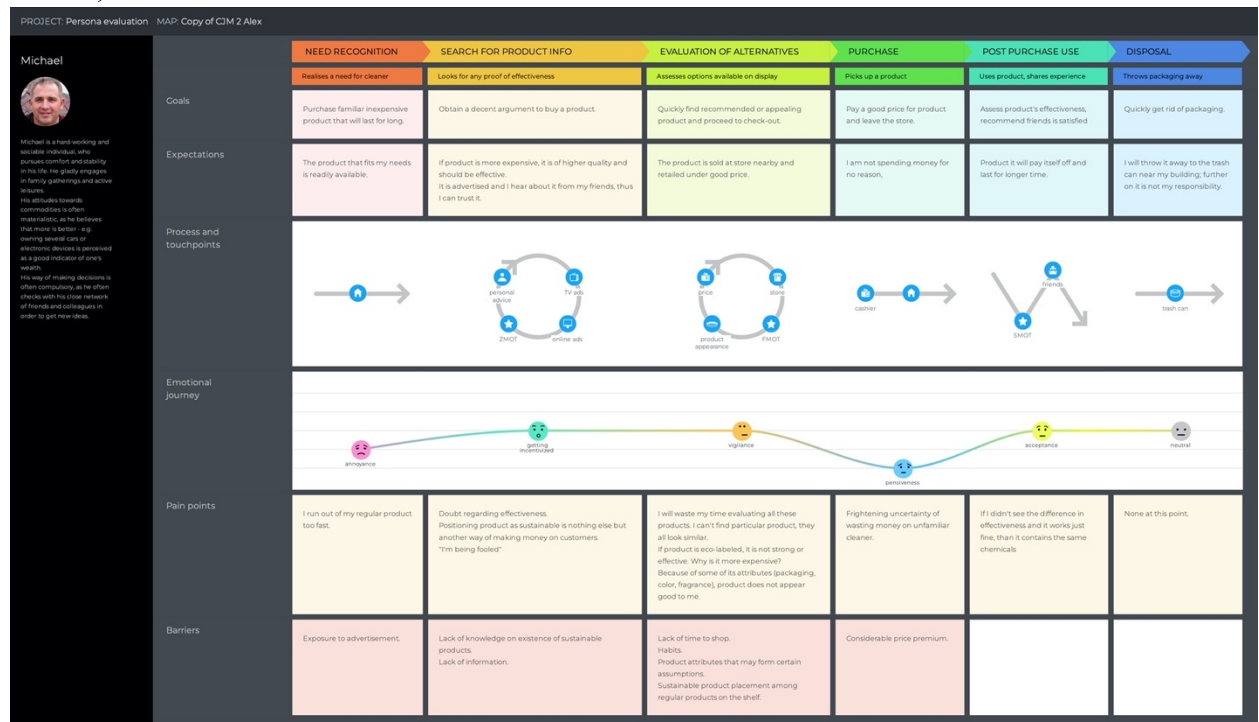
CJM 1, Persona 1 – Wholesome consumer.



CJM 2, Persona 2 – Fluctuating consumer.



CJM 3, Persona 3 – Insular consumer.



For steps 2, 4 and 5 of data analysis, an intertextual analysis was conducted in order to compare recurring schemes, similarities and differences across the various stages of customer journey and three groups of customers, discussed in research methodology (see subsection “Target”). Data were then reviewed to identify patterns, find meaning, understanding and empathy of consumers on their way to sustainable purchase (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). Findings were then put into context – by personas in step 2 and customer journey maps in steps 4 and 5.

5. Findings

The ultimate aim of this study was to explore consumer's representation of the stages of their customer journey for sustainable product and identify the barriers that inhibit consumers from sustainable purchase behavior and thus address the attitude-behavior gap.

Respondents unanimously cited 13 barriers to the purchase of sustainable household cleaners. It was decided to place them in 3 groups according to their common patterns: group 1 - product-related barriers, group 2 - consumer-related barriers, group 3 - marketing, purchasing and situational context-related barriers:

1. Lack of product availability (group 3) Persona 1,2
2. Lack of time (group 2) Persona 3
3. Considerable price premium (group 1) 1 Persona 1,2,3

4. Sustainable product placement among regular products instead of their own aisles or sections. in-store instruments (i.e. shelf layout, price promotions, and price levels) (group 3). Persona 3
5. Lack of knowledge on existence of sustainable products (group 2) Persona 3
6. Habits – we are not raised with idea of sustainability (group 2) Persona 3
7. Lack of consumer trust in ethical (in particular, cruelty-free) claims
8. Skepticism (group 2) Persona 2
9. Lack of product information (group 3) Persona 1, 2, 3
10. False marketing baits (group 3) Persona 2
11. Feeling extra obligations – overwhelming with idea of sustainability (group 2) Persona 2
12. Sustainable product attributes that form certain assumptions (group 1) Persona 3
13. Exposure to advertisement that forms long-term “brainwashing” product associations (group 3) Persona 3

6 barriers were identified already at the first stage of data collection (in-depth interviews): *lack of product availability*(1), *lack of time* (2), *considerable price premium* (3), *sustainable product placement among regular products at the store shelf* (4), *lack of knowledge on existence of sustainable products* (5), *habits* (6).

The first barrier to sustainable purchasing is the *lack of ethical household cleaners* (1) readily available at common supermarkets and retail stores, where it would be the most convenient for an individual to shop (Persona 1, Persona 2). For both personas, this barrier emerges at the stage of evaluation of alternatives at the store. For Persona 2 this means that they were ready to choose a particular product and buy it, however, its unavailability made them change their decision towards a product version that was present at the shelf. In context of Persona 1, however, the unavailability of more sustainable version assumes impossibility of buying ethical cruelty-free item that they assume to be 100% sustainable (as they tend to struggle with finding information regarding brand’s animal testing policies in commonly available sources).

The scarce availability creates a need for customers to travel to more distant specialized “green” stores or bigger supermarkets instead of going to a local grocery store, thus requiring more time for the road, which reveals the second barrier – *lack of time* (2). Customers who attribute to Persona 3 are most likely to be annoyed as they tend to be very short of time and do not originally allow extra time nor for product information search, nor for product evaluation, thus showing low level of involvement in their weekly and daily shopping.

In this respect, one of respondents stated:

“Well, allowing 2 extra hours on going shopping to another edge of the city just to buy a more sustainable version of detergent sounds to me like a joke. I really care about my time, I will just go to the closest store and pick it up” – Natalie, 48 years old, accountant.

In order to travel to specialty stores or bigger supermarkets, consumers spend their money on fuel or public transportation costs, which often can be higher than the cost of purchase of environmentally friendly household cleaner. In addition to higher costs that are caused by this reason, consumers experience dealing with *considerable price premium* (3), because average prices at specialty “green” stores are usually higher than in regular supermarkets. More importantly, consumers see this contrast as even more sharply when sustainable cleaners are *located on the shelves among regular household cleaners* (4). Given a tendency that in traditional supermarkets environmentally friendly cleaners usually have higher prices, consumers see this contrast even more sharply when sustainable cleaners are located on the shelves among regular ones.

Lack of knowledge on existence of sustainable products (5) turned out to be another barrier preventing consumers from translating their concerns into the actual purchase of green products. This barrier implicates the need of building sustainable product awareness of customer, as Persona 3 typically experiences this barrier already at the stage of product information search. In this context, one of the interviewees said:

“I honestly did not know that such products actually exist on the market. I know a lot about organic healthy food and beverage products, but I never paid attention at the cleaners, as they all look as one to me and I usually pick up a regular detergent or kitchen gel that I’m used to. Why switch to something else if like how it works?” – Helga, 57, pharmacist.

The presence of this barrier also shows the existence of another one, such as *habits* (6). On one side, habit and past behavior guide consumer preferences and influence their purchasing behavior, making it difficult to change, especially if they lack knowledge of sustainable product. On another side, habits can be understood as certain characteristics inherent to individual’s way of thinking because of the way they were raised – culturally and mentally. One respondent claimed:

“We haven’t been raised in our country with the conscious idea of taking care of environment. In many countries, like the US and especially in Scandinavia environmental responsibility is set at the legislative level, with people appreciating nature and perceiving it as an incredibly precious asset that affects their lives daily. I don’t think that it’s easy to change our perception on this matter until we start showing the initiative on our own” – Ruslan, 24, student.

However, throughout a process of the in-depth interviews, it turned out that some respondents could not explain their purchasing behavior in a particular situation. Such cases of information

lack would have resulted in gaps on the customer journey maps; they had to be eliminated by conducting point-of-sales observations at First Moment of Truth with consecutive interviews.

7 barriers were identified after both stages of data collection (in-depth interviews and point-of-sales observations at First Moment of Truth with consecutive interviews): *lack of trust (7), skepticism (8), lack of product information (9), false marketing baits (10), feeling extra obligations and overwhelming with idea of sustainability (11), product attributes that form certain assumptions (12), exposure to advertisement (13).*

Information lack gap 1.

Excerpt from in-depth interview:

“When I go to a store to shop for household cleaners, I look for cruelty-free products. However, I know from multiple reliable sources, that all household cleaners in Russia are required to be tested on animals on the legislative level, even though this fact is being thoughtfully covered. Knowing that, I understand I shouldn’t buy any of the products being retailed in our grocery stores, but I still do that. To be a true sustainable consumer within field on household cleaners, I should shop on iHerb or Amazon, as sell only cruelty-free products or look for independent brands that sell customized sustainable cleaners via social media (Instagram). I don’t know why I don’t do this.” – Paulina, 25 years, artist.

Given gap was closed during the first step of data collection (in-depth interview). After a deep discussion on what may impede interviewee’s switching to these buying options, she was able to identify a barrier, intrinsic to Persona type 1 (Wholesome consumer) such as *lack of trust (7)* to ethical claims, as most of the time brands conceal their animal testing ethics, even though this is a requirement from Federal Service on Surveillance for Consumer rights protection in Russia.

At the same time, the respondent was willing to dedicate her time for information search regarding brand’s ethical activities and was positive that the product would be effective, given a considerable number of positive reviews on the site.

Information lack gap 2.

Excerpt from in-depth interview:

“I am well aware of environmental problems we are facing. But on the other hand, it seems as though brands have created this problem and ask us to solve it for our own money. I know it from numerous researches I constantly come across. Thus, I believe that I own too much of revealing information preventing me from being a green consumer.

When I’m at store, I’ll first evaluate the prices of household cleaning products which I know very well and which effectiveness I am confident about. I frequently notice eco labels, I’m aware of what they mean. A few times I saw a sustainable product with no price difference which

looked attractive to me – and, well, okay, I bought it just for the sake of not feeling myself guilty. But I still don't believe brands, this all is greenwashing.” – Ilya, 31 years, consultant.

However, the respondent was unable name any reasons, other than guilt, regarding why would he purchase a sustainable version of a product, even though he seemed pretty confident with his opinion in the beginning of interview. To answer this question, the author gathered data from household cleaner shoppers at points of sales:

“Recently I bought a kitchen cleaner that literally said “Quality ingredients that benefit your family’s health and safety”. The price was the same as the of product’s that I usually buy, so I felt like I’m doing a good thing by buying a sustainable version and bring less harm to the environment and myself. But when I came home and read the package more closely, it turned out it contained the same toxic ingredients, like chlorine and sodium hydroxide, and it was not even eco labeled. I don’t think I want to be engaged in this “brainwasher” again, and I’ll stick to buying my favorite product.” (points at unsustainable version of kitchen cleaner in her basket). – Anastasia, 33 years, dermatologist.

After this First Moment of Truth observation and consecutive interview, it was possible to trace the barriers of individuals whose behavioral patterns are consistent with Persona type 2 (Fluctuating consumer): *skepticism (8); lack of product information (9); false marketing baits (10)* that occur at stages of product info search and evaluation of alternatives, respectively.

Notably, individuals with Persona 2 patterns not only distinguish with their numerous barriers occurring at first 3 stages, making them hesitant to buy sustainable cleaner. At the very last stage of consumer journey, that typically is product disposal after post-purchase use, individuals recognize the need of putting *extra effort (11)* into the fact that technically they need to recycle the plastic packaging. This is particularly caused by limited amount of recycling plants available in many cities, and extra fee being imposed. Thus, individuals feel overwhelmed by controversy – from one point, they realize they have made an effort to engage into more sustainable consumer behavior, however, they believe that the price they pay measured in time, effort and finance is disproportionate to value that they get out of this, which often appears as a barrier later on when they again look for a household cleaner.

Information lack gap 3.

Excerpt from in-depth interview:

“Well, I don’t usually pay attention to eco-labeled cleaning products at all. Why purchase them, when you already have a solution that does the same thing, but for less money? I am not very familiar with all the marketing traps, but I definitely know that I will not buy them... Why?... Because they are so-called “ecologically clean”, natural, which means they are ineffective and inferior. How can ingredients they have fight dirt and bacteria? Regular product for much lower

price will do much better – both for your home and your wallet.” – Valeriy, 53 years, plumbing specialist.

Nevertheless, respondent was unable to explain such a perception of sustainable household cleaner, nor remember what influenced obtaining such a view. Notably, throughout the process of in-depth interviews, most of respondents with Persona 3 attributes with the same perception patterns admitted, that they never once tried sustainable versions. Thus, further research was taken to point-of-sales observation:

“I can’t take this. This cannot be effective enough for me.” (points at sustainable version of kitchen appliances gel). “How can it clean my sink? Wait a minute...” (Looks more attentively at the product). “I thought this was a detergent for kids’ clothes. Well, I wouldn’t buy it anyway, it is not strong enough. Look at the package! (The package is of a light purple color with an image of racoon with a broomstick). I stick to what I consider effective. (Points at unsustainable version of cleaner which package sticker has the following message: “Kills all known germs and viruses” – Alexandra, 49, nurse (see Appendix 1).

The following barriers are most likely to reside in Persona 3 (Insular consumer) sustainable customer journey: *product attributes that form certain assumptions (12)*, such as “femininity” of ethical products compared with “masculinity” of well-known unsustainable version with powerful message at the packaging. This barrier is typically traced at the product evaluation stage, as during several seconds after having their First Moment of Truth with the product consumers form their perception serving as a fundament to their purchase decision. The last barrier is *exposure to advertisement that forms long-term “brainwashing” product associations (13)*, for instance, such as a commonly known phrase “Kills all known germs. Outright” in one of household cleaner’s TV commercial that puts considerable impact on customers’ consciousness already at the very first stage of their journey, as it has strong emotional appeal and is present on the local market for several decades.

6. Discussion

This study adopted customer journey mapping approach in to investigate barriers impeding customers’ purchase of sustainable household cleaner. This approach was favored due to enhanced context it provides in order to understand what customer experiences throughout all stages of sustainable purchasing are: the mental representation of their goals, expectations, emotional journey and decision-making process during the First Moment of Truth after seeing physical product itself. Further, building up a representable customer journey map assumes creating customer Persona, which, in turn, serves as a way to surface and document customers’ need, understand their purchasing decisions and establish empathy with customer. By performing both

stages of customer journey mapping technique, the author was able to recreate 3 purchasing journey scenarios and determine the barriers inherent to each type of the Persona.

The study result is a list of 13 barriers that are responsible for widening the attitude-behavior gap of consumers. The identified barriers also show that some consumers that represent Persona 2 (Fluctuating consumer) type and all of the Persona 3 (Insular consumer) type consumers often perceive the purchase of green products as time-consuming, expensive, and, to extent, pointless activity. However, consumers belonging to Persona 1 (Wholesome consumer) type act as environmentally responsible individuals, who pursuit the goal of reducing their impact during all stages of their journey and view sustainable product purchase as a way of financial support of the brand that produces ethical goods.

The study uncovered 13 barriers that constrain customers' journey to purchasing the sustainable product. Based on these barriers, probable explanations can be suggested for the reported attitude-behavior gap in sustainable purchasing behavior. Overall, the findings align with 5 most commonly met barriers in academia – lack of availability, price premium, lack of trust, lack of information and consumer habits. However, the data collected in process of in-depth interviews and point of sales observations reveled 7 more barriers to be further discussed.

The first barrier author brings into discussion is the lack of availability of sustainable product at a grocery store or a supermarket. The results implicate that consumers usually automatically think that green products are unavailable at the supermarkets where they typically shop, which serves as a decent reason not to even consider purchasing them at all. In this respect, in the work of Gleim et al. (2013) authors conclude that sustainable products are not readily available. However, it is necessary to emphasize the presence of deviations from the previously mentioned research. Thus, even if sustainable cleaner was available at the store, customers would likely not to be able to find it.

Another issue was associated with presence of both sustainable and non-sustainable version on the same shelf, as customers tend to get distracted with the price difference and unconsciously give their preference to a cheaper regular version. This barrier dramatically affects Persona type 3, as customers on the stage of evaluating the available alternatives are often unable to locate environmentally friendly goods and may not wish to dedicate their time on searching, which is another barrier and a very painful point, because customers have to allow considerably more time dedicated for searching, which results in annoyance, frustration and being overwhelmed with idea of contribution to sustainability. The results bring us to the conclusion, that the supermarkets and convenience stores have to take care of making in-store communication more convenient for the customers and allocate products so that they could be easily found.

As for the price premium of the product, this barrier was found in customer journey of all 3 Persona types. In fact, almost all of the interviewees mentioned it at the very beginning of their interview. However, many of those later concluded, that this was not actually the price itself that impeded their sustainable choice, because the difference in cost was not that significant. This finding is also consistent with Gleim et al., 2013, who conclude, that in case of frequently purchased items, consumers perceive the weekly grocery shopping as an inevitable spent, that they always strive to reduce. Continuing this idea, environmentally conscious consumers representing Persona 1 type implied, that the price does not differ that much as others typically tend to perceive. In fact, consumers often automatically take what is cheaper; however, if this process was more mindful, they might have understood, that such a small price difference would not affect their finances considerably and thus reconsider their purchasing behavior. This, obviously, needs an incentive from within.

However, the price premium as it is, is not what actually prevents consumers from making a sustainable purchase. The study results also revealed, that those customers, who completely lack any knowledge on existence of green products never buy them, unless they receive information on their presence (which is common in Persona 3 type case at the stage of product information search). Thus, Smith et al. (2010) and Fraj-Andrés et al. (2017) reported that knowledge of sustainable products positively leads to sustainable purchasing behavior. However, for marketers this constraint may not be the easiest to overcome, as it is hard to identify whether an individual is lacking the knowledge on existence of such type of products. Therefore, the more information regarding sustainable consumption they get, the more likely they will expand their knowledge and convert into sustainable buyers.

When consumers are used to one certain shopping algorithm, it typically becomes very difficult to break off this continuous cycle. The shopping habits of customers and their past behavior guide affect consumer preferences and influence their purchasing behavior, making it hard to change, because this process needs continual conscious decisions and cognitive efforts (Young et al., 2010). But even though habits may be influenced and changed by external factors, consumer skepticism, on the opposite, is something that stays in mind for continuous time. The problem with skeptical consumers is that they have found proof for their beliefs or the lack of thereof thanks to sources of information that they might be exposed to – such as TV and online advertisement, playing the role of the “brainwasher” and leaving powerful messages in consumers’ minds, even if they do not notice that; false marketing baits, such as putting images on the packaging of household cleaners that look very similarly to eco labels; and some of sustainable product attributes, that form a perception of those lacking the effectiveness and even make customers mistakenly associate them with children’s goods. Any combination of these barriers is

most likely to include one more barrier, such as lack of trust in sustainability claims, as many customers especially of Persona 2 and 3 types suppose, that promoting sustainable consumption is the way that companies compensate for the environmental problems they have created.

From the discussion above it becomes clear, that various barriers hinder sustainable purchasing behavior and influence the widening of attitude-behavior gap. The findings obtained in this work may beneficially contribute to the work of retailers in order to incorporate them into their marketing strategy, so they could reach the larger number of customers and affect their decision to put sustainable product in their shopping basket.

Conclusion

By applying customer journey mapping approach, this work reveals the list of barriers that impede or complicate the process of sustainable consumer behavior. Present empirical papers analyzed in extensive literature review of this work mainly adopt either attitude-based and/or choice-based models as their methodological framework, however, the existence of attitude-behavior gaps in present research studies indicates the insufficiency of explanations of complexity of sustainable purchasing behavior. Investigating barriers to sustainable product purchase grasps for insights of consumers' purchasing procedure, as well as consistent and clear mental representation of their decision making (Shove, 2010; Devinney et al., 2010). This paper aims to cover both, and through 21 in-depth interviews and point-of-sales short interviews at buyers' First Moment of Truth extends the current research body by understanding of stages and processes that customers experience on their way to making a sustainable purchase in a multiple of dimensions and revealing barriers, inherent to the specific stage.

The results of this research reveal the necessity of several policy recommendations. First policy recommendation proposed by author in to develop the process of eco certification in Russian Federation, as this was the main criteria of distinguishing sustainable cleaners from non-sustainable ones. Thus, it is crucial that the consumer knows about eco-labeling and distinguishes the quality mark from the false marketing bait. Unfortunately, today Russian market does not have a heavy-handed regulation in terms of eco labeling system, which gives a freedom for companies to speculate (Marpeta, 2020). The eco-trend is gaining more attention, and the buyer risks being deceived. Only one word "eco" gives no guarantee that the packaging was made from recycled materials, and the product itself is environmentally friendly. The unsubstantiated use of "green" insignia to attract customers became very common, known as greenwashing, which creates numerous barriers, such as skepticism and lack of trust. Russia has only one eco certification called the Leaf of Life. However, obtaining such a certification is a considerably expensive procedure,

that scares away numerous producers. For the full list of official trustworthy eco labels, see Appendix 3.

The second policy recommendation is, again, for the Russian government to develop the outdated system of unethical behavior regarding animal testing. As of today, all of the household cleaners in Russia are subject to be tested on animals on the legislative level, even though numerous activists and even companies (like Unilever) are fighting against such cruel procedures that are, unfortunately, completely legal. The alternative method already exists, which are cruelty free product testing procedures, such as bacteriological testing *in-vitro*. According to the information gathered in interviews, Russian sustainable cleaners market loses a considerable share to cruelty-free products retailed online (on iHerb platform, especially) purchased by environmentally cautious individuals.

This study proposes a number of marketing implications that could be implemented into their managerial practice. First, the low-involvement feature of household cleaning products and the tendency to avoid cognitive efforts most frequently lead to thoughtless purchases of these products, not leaving any room for consideration between sustainable and regular alternatives. This is especially important when trying to break the consumers' habits barrier. Buying sustainable products need cognitive efforts of an individual, and one of the possible ways to solve this problem is encouraging buyers to conduct pre-planning before going shopping. Making plans and developing ethical consumption habits enables consumers to reduce compromises against their ethical consumption ideals. In contrast, the absence of an ethical plan/habit often leads to compromises, trade-offs, frustration, and misaligned shopping habits that may stimulate appearing new barriers on their customer journey.

Second, almost all of the participants recognized that conducting a sustainable purchase requires extra financial contribution and thus emphasizes the presence of budgetary constraint to acting as a responsible consumer. However, as it can be seen on the example of Persona 2, these individuals at the stage of purchase feel guilty for not being able to put sustainability of the product as their very first priority. In real life, nevertheless, achieving sustainable buying behavior should not be perceived as an extra cost by individuals, considering consuming less can save many more resources. Thus, it is important to help individuals see their possibility to attain several goals at the same time (budget, health, environmental care) without compromising. Redirecting people's perception from acquisition to using things longer and recycling, we can reduce this perceived high cost of sustainable actions.

Third, point of sales observations and interviews with buyers revealed, that often customers perceive sustainable products as inferior and even ineffective, even though they have never tried them. Such an attitude derives from lack of knowledge regarding latest findings and innovations,

as well as stereotypes that assume presence of a certain ingredient (such as chlorine or alcohol) to tackle certain task. Once again, the need of proper education on sustainable products and lifestyle is highly needed; as well as in-store communication and product attributes that readily give interested customers the information they need.

Fourth, individuals often tend not to recognize the use post-purchase use and disposal of the product as a part of sustainable customer journey. Through appropriate campaigns with alternative messages that shed light on all stages of customer journey (or consumption), it could be possible to overcome this lack of awareness. Reinforcement of sustainable behaviors beyond acquisition is needed as well as the elimination of obsolescence through the extension of lifecycles of the products.

Finally, it is undoubtable, that among 3 consumer personas, Persona 1 (wholesome consumer) approach towards purchasing of sustainable products has the most relevance and impact on promoting sustainable consumption among all consumers. For these consumers, sustainability is perceived as necessary and urgent, it brings meaning and will transcend their own lives. Therefore, it is important for marketers to recognize the value of this persona, understand their mental representation of customer journey process and use it as a benchmarking example to nurture customers' education and creating mindfulness regarding sustainable consumption. However, the data also revealed that these particular consumers may suffer from emotional frustration affected by ethical policies and lack of possibility to buy cruelty-free sustainable cleaners in our country. Therefore, it is important to recognize the future thinking capability of this persona and their need for personal and collective fulfillment.

This work had several limitations indicating areas for future research. Obviously, it lacked time and diversity of participants (socio-demographics, lifestyle, etc.). Typically, in such kinds of researches assuming deep introspective in consumers' cautious thoughts the data collection may take up to several years. However, this work may serve as a foundation for future scholars, that may wish to further expand the data collected and find more patterns of Personas as well as advancing their customer journey maps and reveling new barriers. Further, the scope of the research touched upon only those households that go shopping to physical grocery stores. However, it is important to consider, that a considerable proportion of all the consumers shops for household cleaners online. Getting access to digital marketing data, such as conversion rate, retention rate, click-through-rate, etc. can serve as a solid justification for the behavior of the customers and provide deeper insights on barrier constraining their purchase of sustainable products. Finally, the further research should not be limited with only one product range. Analyzing as many types of products and participants' choice between sustainable and non-

sustainable version will also improve degree of accuracy of the data and contribute to new insights that will help researchers understand how to narrow the attitude-behavior gap.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Research workflow

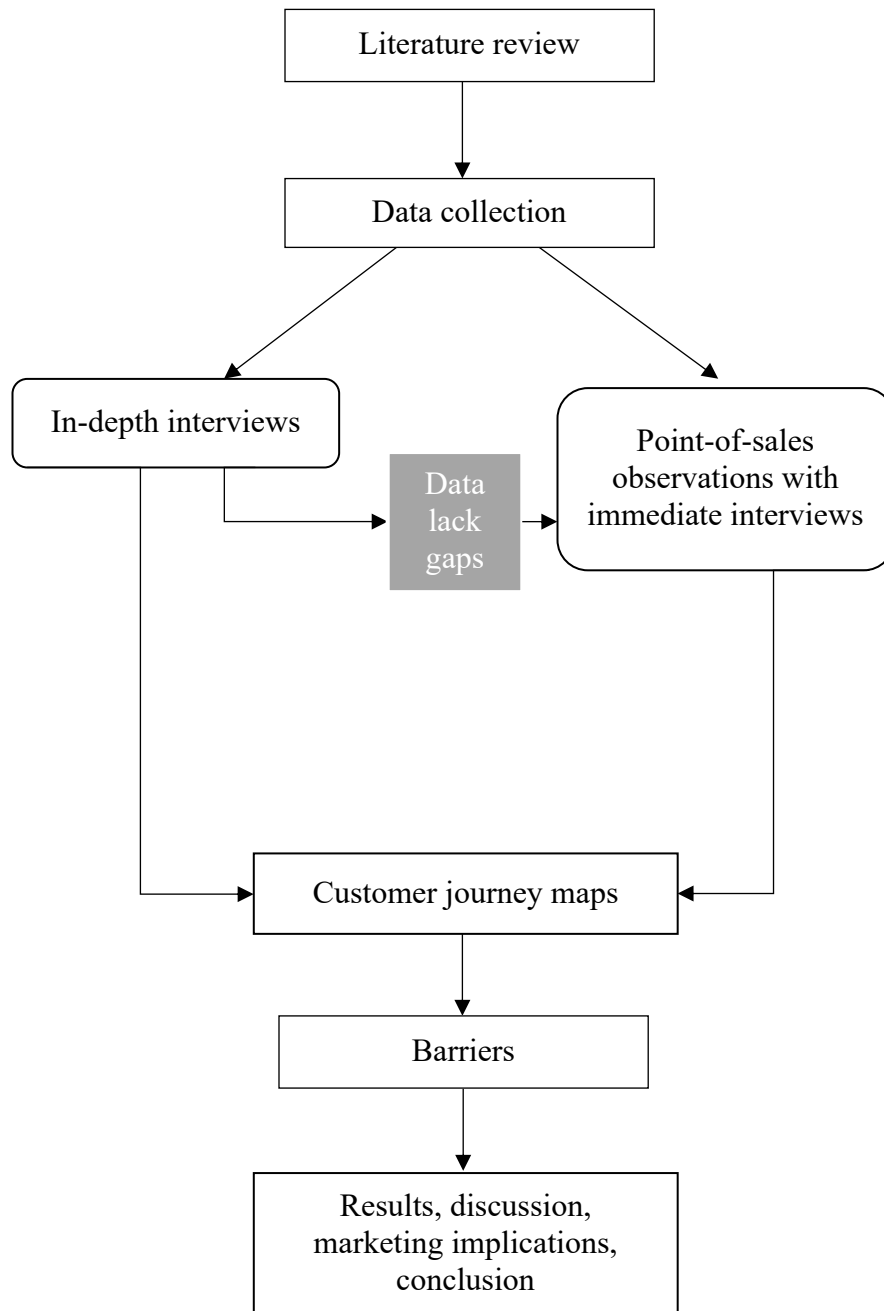
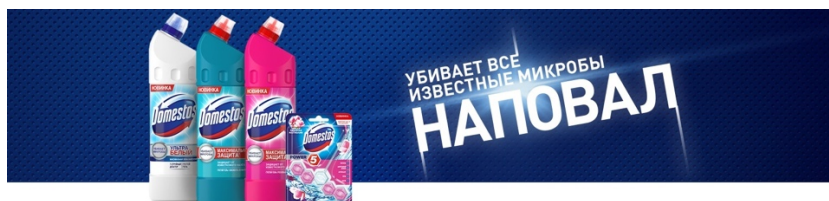


Fig. 5 Workflow of research

Appendix 2. Examples of unsustainable and sustainable household cleaner (left to right).



Example of masculinity-associated advertisement of household cleaner.



Appendix 3. Examples of eco-labeling



European Flower, or Eco Label. Eco-labeling for the countries of the European Union, introduced in 2001. Unsafe components and products of animal origin can be found in the products marked with the “European Flower”, but their number is minimized.



Blue Angel, or Der Blaue Engel. German eco-labeling, created with the support of several government ministries. It allows the content of harmful substances and products of animal origin, but concentrates on the solution of environmental pollution problems.



Northern (Scandinavian) swan. Eco-labeling originates from Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland. Implies strict requirements, excludes any presence of harmful substances and products of animal origin, packaging is fully recyclable.



Japanese eco-labeling. Indicates the product is environmentally friendly in every cycle of production and processing, but does not exclude the presence of harmful substances and products of animal origin.



Vegan, Cruelty Free and Not tested on animals. One of the most stringent eco-labels in the world. Indicates the product is not only completely safe, but also ethical, has not been tested on animals, and it does not contain products of animal origin.

Leaf of life. It was developed and introduced by the Ecological Union of St. Petersburg in 2007. This is the only Russian eco-label recognized internationally.

